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ORPHANS OF THE STORM

HENRY MacMAHON


Chapelle
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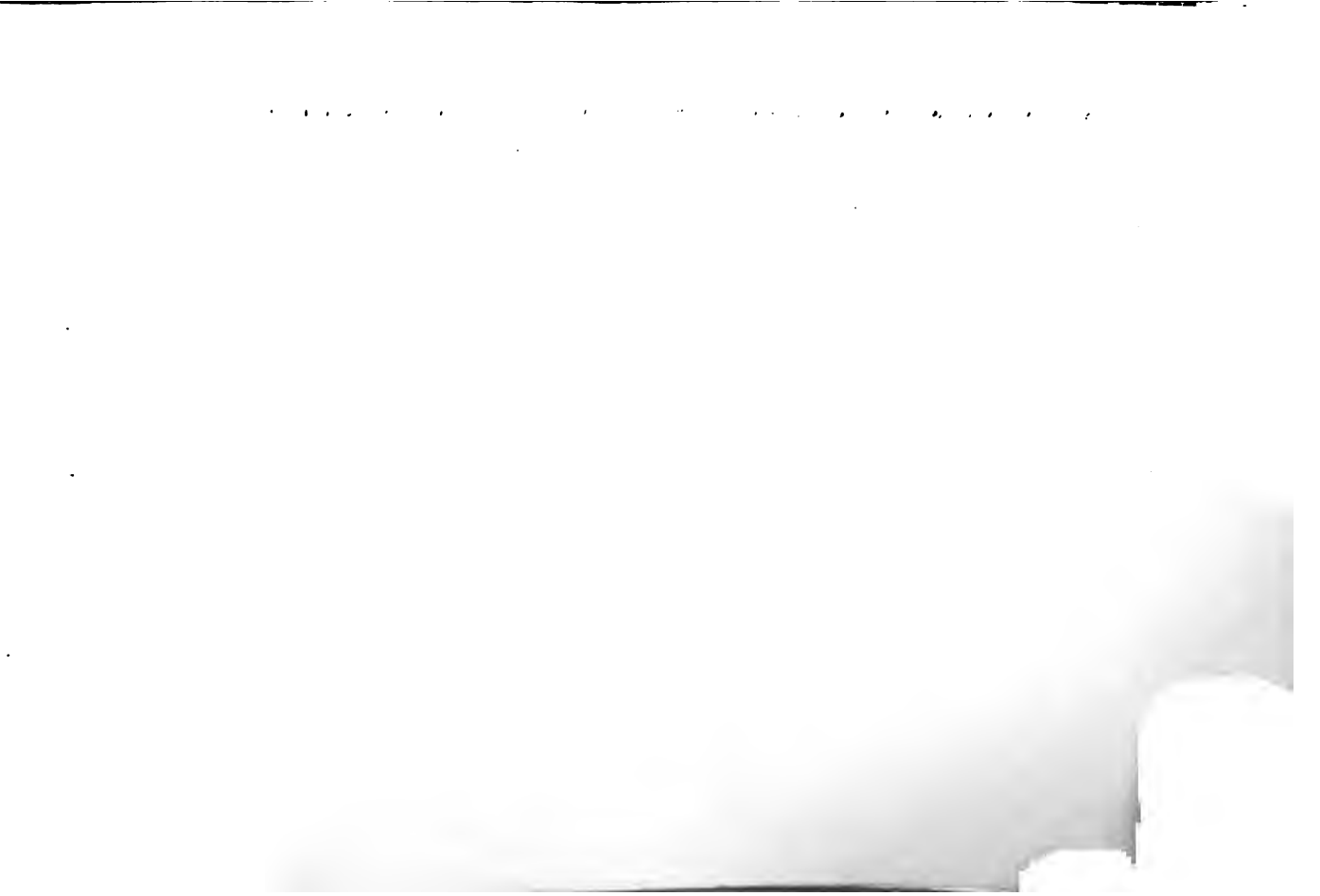
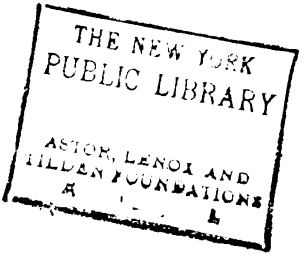
1 Fiction, American

ORPHANS OF THE STORM

MacMahon

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LLIAN AND DOROTHY GISH AS THE TWO ORPHANS IN D. W. GRIFFITH'S ORPHANS OF THE STORM. *Frontispiece.*

ORPHANS OF THE STORM

A COMPLETE NOVEL

FROM D. W. GRIFFITH'S MOTION PICTURE EPIC ON THE IMMORTAL THEME OF

THE TWO ORPHANS

NOVELIZED BY

HENRY MAC MAHON

ILLUSTRATED WITH SCENES FROM THE PHOTO-PLAY

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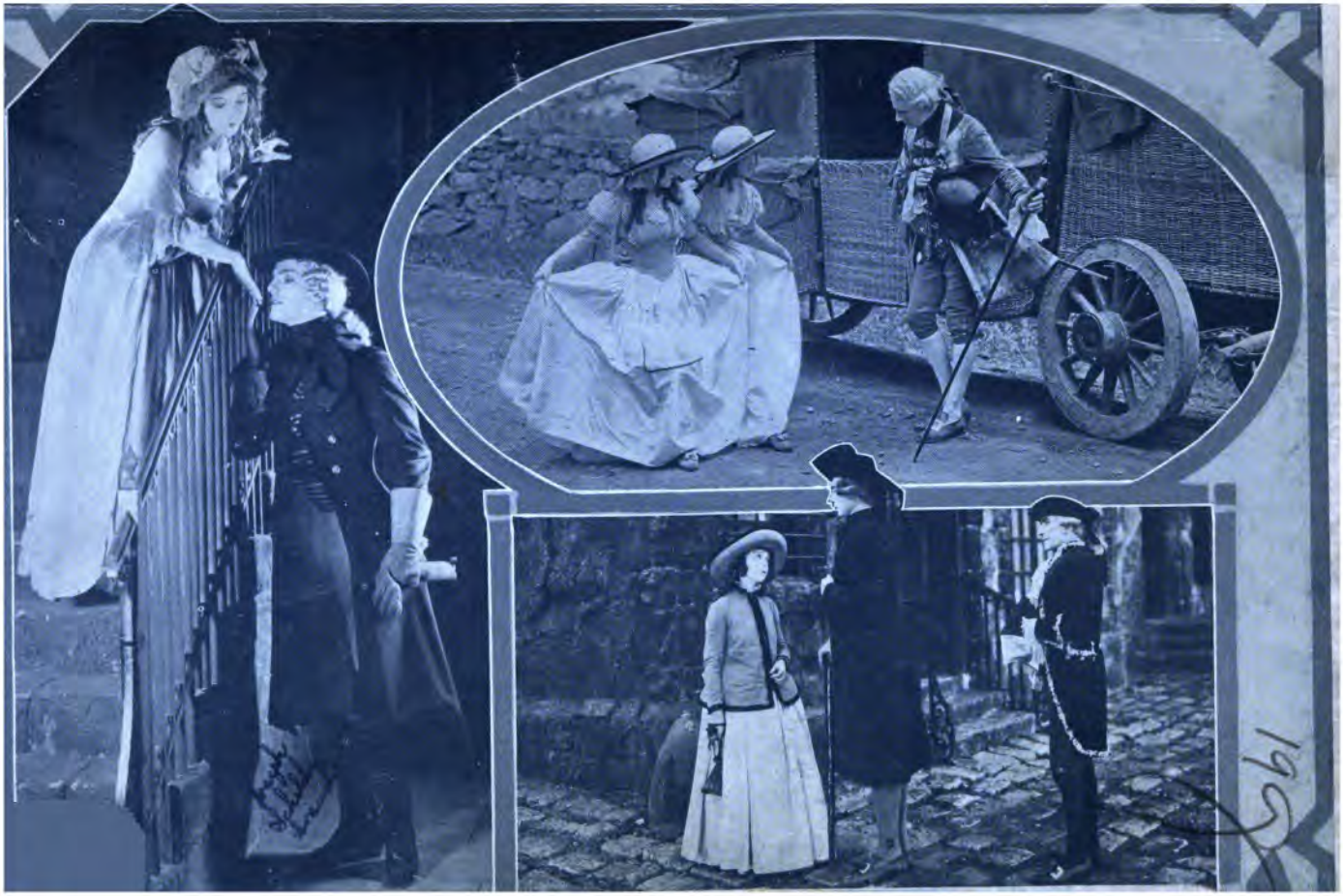

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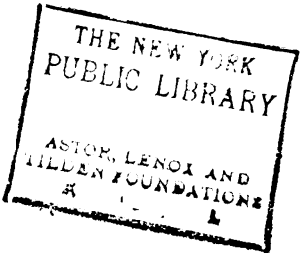
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Napoleon at Elba. Shocked surprise at Louise's awful insinuation struggled with panic fear. At last Henriette faced her sister squarely. She came over and knelt beside her chair, raising a small hand to high Heaven.

"Desert you for a Man!" said Henriette, breathlessly. "Why, the very idea that I could ever think such a thing. Dear, here is my right hand; take it and bear witness: I solemnly swear *never to marry till you yourself can see and approve my husband!*"

The left hand of Louise traveled up till it met and lay flat on the other's upraised palm. An expression of happiness overspread the blind girl's face. She leaned over and kissed her sister. The two girls rose and left the old home of Evreux.

CHAPTER II

THE JOURNEY TO PARIS

Locomotion in those pre-railroad days was by stage coach except for the rich and noble who rode in their chaises. The way of the diligence led past winding streams and bright meadows busy with haymakers; past picturesque water mills and stone chateaux, anon along tree-shaded avenues grateful in their coolness.

Hard as the leathern seats were and however wearisome the ride, the girls forgot discomfort in Henriette's description of the sights and scenes and Louise's just as eager listening. Then at the stops the young women would get out and stretch their weary limbs whereof they suddenly became aware as the motion ceased. They were the only passengers, with unlimited time for the naive confidences which girlhood loves.

"Are you sure that Cousin Martin will really meet us at the Paris coach house?" asked the blind sister anxiously.

"I wrote him that we were coming," re-

plied Henriette simply. "Of course he will be there and awaiting our arrival."

"But if he should not—"

"Then, we have his address and will go to his house. Never fear, little sister, it will be all right . . ."

The lumbering coach-and-six did its hundred miles a day, bad roads or good roads. But within a few miles of Paris a whiffletree broke, the ungainly vehicle stopped, and the men jumped off to hold the horses and repair the damage. Henriette and Louise soon left the hard seats for a few minutes too.

Down the other side of the narrow turn of the road where the accident had occurred, thundered the beautiful carved and gilded chaise of a famous nobleman, Marquis de Praille, accompanied by gallant outriders and backed by liveried footmen on the high rear seats. Inside the equipage were the Marquis and his commissionaire La Fleur.

The black and dusty old stage coach blocked the way.

As the aristocrat's journey rudely stopped, with the chaise horses thrown back on their haunches, a bewigged and

powdered head was thrust out of the window, roaring:

"What is the meaning of this?"

Descending presently with his follower to survey the scene, the noble Marquis enraged at the blocking of his day's pleasuring belabored the chief ostler with his cane. Smartly the blows rained down on the cowering sufferer, alternate right and left in rhythmic strokes that touched each and several part of the canaille anatomy.

This gentle exercise finished, the Marquis espied around the corner of the coach the two young passengers. Another side of the Grand Seigneur's nature disclosed itself.

Mon Dieu, what a vision! Blue eyes, yellow ringlets framing most kissable features, dainty form, twinkling feet, flower-like elegance—a rustic Psyche far more to be desired than the ladies of the Court! The Marquis hardly looked twice at the blind girl. All his glances were for Henriette.

Self-conscious, the noble gentleman plumed and preened. Patting down his somewhat ruffled apparel, adjusting his fashionable wig and peruke, and touching

up his mouth with the lipstick that the dandies of that age carried, he advanced elegantly upon the young women, cane in one hand and the other toying delicately with a hand muff.

Henriette curtsied and smiled, and bade Louise do the same. They knew not the ways of Courts, but native courtesy and naive simplicity were theirs. Presently the elder girl found herself telling the distinguished personage all the details of their trip, the appointment with M. Martin, and the hope of curing Louise by a visit to the Faculty.

The gallant de Praille, all bows and smirks, was offering them the hospitality of the chaise. What a grand stranger, truly! A regal caress of Henriette's fingers in the handclasp. Most patronizing (or was it odious familiarity?) his dainty touch of her bare arms; the jeweled hand that toyed with her ringlets; the dexterous move as if to encircle her waist; the playing—in the airiest, most fluttering manner imaginable—with the lace that draped her adorable little bosom!

Quietly Henriette replied to his overtures:

"No, monsieur, I think it is best that we go in our own coach!"

The chastiser of canaille and charmer of ladies did not seem a whit abashed. Paying them ceremonious farewell, he withdrew and repaired to his equipage, the road for which was now clear. The girls stood a minute giggling at his mannerisms, as Henriette described his finery and imitated his peacock airs.

The girls would not have smiled had they understood. La Fleur, whom they had scarcely noticed, was the pander of the Marquis's vices. The two were deep in plot. 'Twas whispered talk, but a chance bystander might at least have overheard the words:

". . .At my fete of Bel-Air—make no mistake, La Fleur—I rely on you. One hundred louis, the reward . . ."

Or another scene that marked de Praille's entry into Paris, might have interested them. Driving recklessly to make up time lost in the blockade, the nobleman's equipage knocked down and ran over a luckless denizen of the faubourgs. Carelessly flinging out gold to the relatives of the dead woman who were sobbing or cursing him,

he leaned forward and inquired most solicitously of the driver:

"But—are the horses hurt?"

Indeed the nobles of that time regarded the masses as little if any superior to cattle or any other of their possessions.

In the country the common man toiled a serf without wages, for his master; while in Paris itself, the centre of gayety and fashion, the fruit of his toil was expended by the aristocrats in prodigal luxury.

The bourgeoisie or middle class bore the brunt of the taxes. A gay parasitic element, the demi-monde, ministered to the nobles' pleasures. Below, the "submerged tenth" of the thievish and begging classes plied their questionable trades, with a large margin of the city's population on the very verge of starvation.

It hints eloquently of the terrible conditions that there were no less than *thirty thousand professional beggars in Paris at this time.* Their wan, pinched faces, gaunt forms and palsied vitality were an outstanding reproach to a flower-like but decadent aristocratic culture founded on the muck of cruelty and oppression.

Nothing had the girls (or the simple-

minded country Doctor who sped them) known of the dangers or pitfalls of the city. Vile gallantry or viler underworld was looking for just such prey

CHAPTER III

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE COACH HOUSE

The Normandy-Paris stage swung into the city as the shades of evening were falling and deposited our heroines at journey's end in a little square beyond the Pont Neuf where the coach house was situated. As they alighted, cries of "Sedan! Sedan chair!" were heard. Brawling chairmen "mixed it" with pummeling fists and kicking legs to be in the front lines for the passengers' custom.

'Twas a terrifying scene from which they were glad to escape to a side bench whence they watched the homeward hurrying throngs and looked vainly for Monsieur Martin. As in the country, Henriette tried to pass the time of day with divers and sundry folk, but it was no use. They gave her queer looks or hurried on, as if stone deaf.

"They simply pay no attention to you here!" she complained to Louise, "but never mind! Cousin Martin will come soon, and take us to his home."

Presently the city lamplighter was lighting the street lantern above them; he went his way and the Place was deserted.

There *was* a man lurking in the shadows of a portico nearby, though 'twould somewhat strain credulity to imagine him the elderly tradesman Martin. He was a powerful and burly figure, black habited, of impudent visage quite unlike a gentle relative's. In the deeper shadows back of him crouched two fellows, one of whom bore in his hand a black cloth.

"Oh, why does not Monsieur Martin come?" said Henriette to herself softly, with a little gesture of half-despair.

"I am your cousin Martin!" said the man, advancing upon them with a smirk that was like a leer.

Henriette involuntarily drew back, withdrawing Louise a few steps with her. Relief and fear of the strange "cousin" struggled within her. The man laid a hand on the elder girl's arm and at the same time signalled the ruffians. A sudden impulse moved Henriette to wrench herself free.

In a twinkling the three were upon her. While the burly leader tore away her grasp of the blind Louise, the fellow with the

cloth threw it over her face and shoulders, stifling her screams.

Not a passer-by in sight!

Fiercely Henriette struggled, twice lifting the cloth from her face, and fiercely Louise sought to twine herself around the body of her lovely guide and protector. But the big man again had thrown the blind girl off, and the fellows, having tied the black cloth, lifted Henriette between them and carried her into a waiting fiacre.

"We've got her safe now, La Fleur," said the kidnappers.

"Drive your hardest to Bel-Air, the Marquis's fete begins at nine o'clock!" said the villain addressed, who was none other than the famous nobleman's pander . . .

What cared the Marquis and La Fleur about the blind one's misfortunes. As La Fleur had said:

"Never fear—blindness is ever a good stock in trade. She'll find her career—in the streets of Paris!"

Louise stopped, and listened for the retreating footsteps. The noise of the kidnappers' melee was quite stilled. Instead, the diminishing sound of hoofbeats and

(*D. W. Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm"*)
"I WON'T GO!" ANNOUNCED LOUISE FIRMLY. "YOU'LL MEET SOMEBODY, GET MARRIED AND I'LL BE LEFT ALL ALONE!"

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crunching wheels woke the echoes of the silent street; mingled with it—perhaps not even actually, but the memory of an earlier outcry—the muffled cry, "Louise! Louise!"

Louise listened again, but no familiar sound met her ear—only the rushing of the water, or the footsteps of some pedestrian in the distance.

"I hear nothing," she said, in a terrified whisper. Hoping against hope, and in a voice trembling with fear, she spoke as it were to the empty winds:

"Henriette! Speak to me, speak one word. Answer me, Henriette!" No answer, no reply!

"Louise!" sounded faintly on the far-off wind, or perhaps her poor brain conjured it. The blind girl knew now that her sister was beyond reach, and in the power of cruel men who knew no mercy.

"They have dragged her away to some hiding," sensed the poor blind brain, "or perhaps that carriage is bearing her away from me forever. Oh, what shall I do?" she cried aloud, in tones that would have thrilled a hearer's heart with pity. "Alone—alone! Abandoned!"

With the last word the full horror of

her situation surged upon her, and she burst into a torrent of tears. Alone in Paris! Blind and alone, without relatives or friends.

You who sit in a cozy home, surrounded by safeguards and comforts, can have no idea of the blind foundling's utter dependence or the terrible meaning conveyed by the one word "abandoned."

"What will become of me?" she cried, between the sobs. "Alone in this great city; helpless and blind—my God, what *shall* I do? Where am I to go? I do not know which way to turn!"

Self-preservation, and the piteous hope that the house fronts might give her some clue to her bearings, caused the girl to stagger from the centre of the square to the sides. Along one of them she picked her way, moaning for help and having not even a stick to guide her. Slowly, painfully she groped around the Place until unwittingly she approached the railing or wall which served as a guard to the steep bank that descended to the river.

Along this she felt her way until suddenly her hands met the empty air. What, now? Should she return as she had come?

No, she thought; the flagging beneath her feet was heavy and substantial: 'twas probably the intersection of another street, and a few steps would bring her to house fronts again.

Louise walked down the flags and stepped into nothingness—thirty feet sheer precipice into the river Seine!

In the instant horror of falling to death off the stone pier, she found herself saved by being clasped in a man's arms.

"Great heavens!" this individual exclaimed as he bore her to the centre of the square. "What were you going to do?"

"Nothing — nothing — what was it?" cried Louise incoherently, realizing only that she had been pulled back from death's door.

"Another moment," said the man in horror-stricken accents, "and you would have been drowned in the Seine! I leaped up the steps and just managed to catch you. Lucky that five minutes ago I had to go down to the river to fill my water can. You—"

The tones of the voice, which struck Louise as young-old in its timbre, were soft and kind with a refined and even plain-

tive quality albeit not cultured. Here was a good soul and a friend, she sensed at once. But could she suddenly have won her sight, Louise would have been astonished at the actual vision.

Pale narrow spirituelle features, lit by beautiful eyes and surmounted by wealth of straight black hair; a form haggard, weazened by deformity, yet evidencing muscular toil; delicate hands and feet that like the features bespoke the poesy of soul within mis-shapen shell,—the hunchback scissors-grinder Pierre Frochard presented a remarkable aspect which, once seen, no one could ever forget!

Wonder and awe were writ on the pale face as he looked at the lovely angel he had rescued. Pierre shuddered again over the escape. Better that he should have suffered myriad deaths than that a hair of that lovely head were injured. As for himself—poor object of the world's scorn and his family's revilings—was he worthy e'en to kiss the hem of her garment?

Pierre looked yet again. The angelic little creature was blind! Wide-open yet sightless orbs whereof the cataracts blackened the view of all Life's perils, as they

had of the imminent river. A surge of self-abnegating, celestial love, mingled with divine pity, filled the hunchback's soul.

Tenderly he inquired about her misfortune, and she told him the sad tale of the journey and Henriette's kidnapping . . . Their talk was broken in upon by the entry of the hag Mere Frochard and her elder son.

Alas, poor Louise! In finding a friend thou hast likewise found the bitter bread of the stranger and the slavery of the Frochard clan! The wretched hunchback is himself in thrall. Little dreams he the woe that shall attend ye both, the while Henriette is the victim of far mightier pomps and powers.

Though Henriette shall not know thy fate for many a day, though she shall search long and frantically and not meet the beloved until within the shadow of the guillotine, it may give the reader what comfort it will that the blind sister still lives—a lost mite in the vast ocean of Paris!

CHAPTER IV

THE FETE OF BEL-AIR

Henriette had swooned in the vehicle which was being rapidly driven into open country.

Gradually color came back into wan cheeks. The blue orbs and Cupid lips fluttered and half opened; the dazed little brain tried vainly to sense what had happened.

Quickly the man La Fleur took out a small phial and poured some few drops of a dark liquid on the girl's tongue. Half consciously swallowing it, she sank back again—this time, into a deeper nirvana.

They were coming now to a large estate, the grounds of which were brightly illuminated. Outside the iron palings a crowd of beggars shrieked and gesticulated. Within, all was gayety. La Fleur and his fellows dismounted with their burden. They laid the inamimate form of the Norman girl on a litter and covered it with a white canopy. As this strange pallet awaits the Master's wishes in anteroom, let us take a peep at the celebrated Sunken Gardens.

Bel-Air had been beautified in the lovely exedra style for which Petit Trianon is noted. Art blended so cunningly with Nature one might almost mistake marble Venus for live goddess or flesh-and-blood naiads of the lake for carved caryatides. The very musicians seemed children of Pan as they tuned their lyres and fiddles in woodland nook.

Before the plashing fountain supported by little naked Loves in marble—flanked by balustrades and bordered by screens of myriad crystalline glass drops—a cool white pavement invited the gay minuet. Beyond, a huge banquet table groaned with delicacies and wines the cost of which would have gone far to rationing the thirty thousand hungry of the nearby City. Indeed, enough was wasted to have fed many. With bizarre and often gross entertainment Marquis de Praille amused his guests who themselves presented a wanton and amorous scene that seemed itself a part of the elaborately staged revels

What gallantry, what passion, what low asides and snatched kisses! as the squirming dancers intoxicated the spectators' sense or gauzily draped coryphees plunged

in the pool now converted into a fountain of wine. The elegant gentlemen and the audacious women guests—themselves miracles of bold costuming and sixty-inch snow-white coiffures—knew the play foretold the coarser revels that all would indulge in after midnight.

Around the banqueting tables a number of ladies and gentlemen were seated, some still toying with the savory viands and drinking rare vintages of Champagne, whilst others idly watched the dancers or discussed the latest court news and high life scandal.

"Well, what do you think of my retreat from the whirl and bustle of Paris?" asked Marquis de Praille of his vis-a-vis, who was a dashing sort of beauty.

"My dear Marquis," replied that lady, "I am delighted. It is a satisfaction to find a gentleman who maintains the customs of his rank."

"And yet there are fools who want to change them," exclaimed a young nobleman from the opposite table.

"You are right—fools—fools," answered de Praille, as he motioned to the servants for more wine.

"By the way," asked the lady who had first spoken, "you have heard the news?"

As no one had heard anything particularly new for the last two hours, she continued by saying:

"They say that the new minister of police is as hard as a stone, and cold as a fish. He is going to put a stop to all our amusements, and, Marquis, this may be the last entertainment you will give at Bel-Air."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the host. "I'd like to see the minister of police who would dare to interfere with the pleasures of a French nobleman. Who and what is he?"

"He is from Touraine; is called the Count de Linieres, and is the uncle of the Chevalier Maurice de Vaudrey."

"Where is the Chevalier?" suddenly asked one of the ladies, as she was thus reminded of one whom report had described as rather eccentric, and on whom she wished to exercise her charms. "You promised me I should see him, Marquis."

"So I did, and I expect him, as well as another guest. I warn you, ladies, that she will be the rival to you all."

"Who is the other guest?" was the question which assailed him from all quarters.

"A young lady," answered the Marquis as if enraptured at the thought. "Sweet sixteen, beautiful as a rose, and innocent as an angel."

"Where did you find such a pearl?" asked one of the ladies banteringly.

"In Normandy."

This announcement was followed by a titter from the feminine members of the group.

"Yes, I know these Normandy beauties!" scorned one of the ladies, betraying in spite of herself a tinge of jealousy.

"Rustics! Quite unpolished and de trop," chimed in another fair one, cat-like in her verbal claws.

"Laugh away, ladies," said de Praille gayly. "You shall see a real Norman beauty, and then see how jealous you will all become at sight of her."

At this moment a noise was heard from the outside, and in the midst of some confusion a rather singular voice was heard saying:

"I tell you I must go in, and I will. I must speak to your master."

On hearing this the Marquis went toward

the entrance, and demanded of the servants who this was who was so importunate.

"Picard," answered the owner of the singular voice. "Picard, valet to the Chevalier de Vaudrey."

The Marquis immediately gave orders that he be admitted, and a sharp, wiry-looking fellow, wearing the de Vaudrey livery, stood before the gay party.

"Most excellent Marquis and most beautiful ladies," he said to the general mirth as he curtsied low and executed a neat pas seul, "my master the Chevalier is very late, but he will surely appear."

"Late?" protested one of the young blades who knew the Prefect's nephew. "Why, he told me he expected to be here early."

"Alas, detained by business—" replied Picard in a melancholy tone.

"Business! A young nobleman has no business!"

"It is so, gentlemen. Some nights, I grant you, he devotes to pleasure, as a young aristocrat should; but his days—how do you suppose he spends his days?"

"Sleeps, of course," said the Marquis, in a positive tone.

"Gentlemen, allow me to tell you confidentially," said the valet mysteriously as the gentlemen gathered around him, fully expecting to hear of some treason. "He works! actually works! He sits down and reads and writes as though he were an advocate."

CHAPTER V

BEL-AIR—(Continued)

"Bah!" exclaimed one. "You don't expect us to believe that?"

"Yes, and more, too," answered Picard, who enjoyed immensely being able to impart some information to his superiors. "Why, how do you suppose he acts to the common people who want to see him? His creditors, for instance?"

"Why, if they are importunate, he beats them, I suppose," answered de Praille, who often "settled" bills thus.

"Yes, he beats them," sneered Picard; "he pays them! Yes, gentlemen, he pays his tradespeople." And the valet surveyed the group, enjoying the surprise he had given them.

"Oh, the poor fellow is lost!" exclaimed one of the party, who at the age of twenty had spent a large fortune and was now living on his wits.

"Completely," affirmed Picard, "and all owing to the company he keeps. He won't be guided by me—"

"The Chevalier Maurice de Vaudrey!"

Picard's further revelations were cut short by the entry of his master who dismissed the valet and presented his apologies to the company.

In any assemblage the young Chevalier of twenty-two might have been remarked for his Greek God features and the occasional smile that made him look, from time to time, a veritable bright Phoebus Apollo.

He was far handsomer, far more attractive than the host, but a young-old cynic about these goings-on. Nephew of the police prefect of Paris, he had been specially invited to forestall—by reason of his presence—any Governmental swooping down on Praille's wild party. Evidently he was not thinking of morals or of license, but his thoughts were far other.

"The people cry out for bread," said the Chevalier, looking at the board and thinking of the shrieking beggars.

Marquis de Praille raised his fashionable lorgnette, contemplating a vast chateau-like confection on the table, and sprung his little joke.

"Why don't they eat cake?" he replied [illegible]ily, with a cackling laugh.

De Vaudrey smiled fleetingly, then half-serious, half-smiling, raised a hand in polite protest. Two fair ones carried him off eagerly to retail to the distinguished visitor a morsel of gossip.

"The Marquis has made another conquest!" whispered one to him behind her fan, to which the other added: "Yes, he found a *marvelously beautiful* Norman peasant journeying to Paris in a stage coach, so he had La Fleur take her and fetch her here—a mere rustic, to outvie us all!"

"Yes, 'twill be good sport," replied the cynic. "These country girls that his excellency abducts are willing victims."

They were interrupted by a procession of servants bringing in the covered pallet.

The spread was thrown off, a restorative administered to the recumbent figure—Henriette sat up and gazed in blank stupefaction at the crowding revelers.

She staggered to her feet, looking for a friendly face somewhere.

Of a sudden, the mental image of her lost sister shot her as with a violent agony.

"My sister Louise—where is she?" she pleaded. "Quick! Please let me go to her —don't you understand? She is BLIND!"

Sobs almost choked the little voice. "She cannot take a SINGLE STEP without me!"

De Vaudrey looked up to see the tiny creature running hither and yon, asking the laughing gentlemen for help, repulsing Praille's embraces, fending off the other satyr who would drown her sorrows in fizz. If this were play-acting, it excelled the finest efforts of Adrienne Lecouvreur! De Praille had now grasped her firmly by the waist and shoulders, his sensual breath was on her cheek, a last cry escaped her:

"Among all these noblemen, is there not ONE MAN OF HONOR?"

The despairing outcry pierced the Chevalier's shallow cynicism, touching the finer feelings that had lain dormant.

He sprang to her side, dashed de Praille's arms from her exquisite form. Then, facing his bewildered host, he said in calm even tones to the girl:

"Come, Mademoiselle, we will leave this place."

Suiting the word to the action, he offered his arm to Henriette and started to go. With a fury restrained only by convention-

(*D. W. Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm"*)
THE MARQUIS DE PRAILLE IS ENRAPTURED BY THE LITTLE VISION FROM THE STAGE COACH (HENRIETTE PLAYED BY LILLIAN GISH.)

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al usages, de Praille was across their path and barred the way with his wand.

"This is my house," he said hoarsely, "and I will not permit this insult!" As he spoke, the chimes sounded midnight. "Do you hear? After twelve o'clock, no one ever leaves Bel-Air!"

For answer de Vaudrey dashed aside the extended wand, escorted the kidnapped girl to the foot of the staircase. De Praille was upon them again. This time he drew his sword. Fascinated, the courtiers and their women companions watched the outcome.

Gently shielding Henriette behind him, de Vaudrey drew. Stroke and counter-stroke and parry of rapiers and lightning-like motion glinted in the air. Henriette was the affrighted center of the fashionable group that, according to the custom of that time, awaited the issue of the duel without intervening.

Glory be! her protector was parrying the Marquis' wild thrusts while he himself bided an opening. It came with a suddenness as dramatic as the duel itself. A lunge of the villain had left his own side exposed. De Vaudrey sidestepped and as he did so

plunged his rapier between the ribs of the owner of Bel-Air.

The mortally stricken de Praille sank back against a marble bench. De Vaudrey scarcely glanced at him. Taking Henriette by the hand, he rushed with her up the staircase and out to liberty.

Before the Grand Seigneur's cronies thought to avenge their master, they had passed the astonished servants, passed the minatory beggars at the gates, and hailing a fiacre were on their way to Paris.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE FROCHARDS' DEN

One hundred and fifty years of outlawry had made the Frochard clan a wolfish breed; battening on crime, thievery and beggary. The head of the house had suffered the extreme penalty meted out to highwaymen. The precious young hopeful, Jacques, was a chip of the old block—possibly a shade more drunken and a shade less enterprising.

But the real masterful figure was the Widow Frochard, his mother, a hag whose street appearance nurses used to frighten naughty children. Hard masculine features, disheveled locks and piercing black eyes gave her a fearsome look enhanced by a very vigorous moustache, a huge wart near the mouth, the ear-hoops and tobacco pipe that she sported, and the miscellaneous mass of rags that constituted her costume.

In this menage of the begging Frochards, the crippled scissors-grinder Pierre was the only individual worth his salt, and he was

heartily despised by his brother Jacques and his mother.

The hag's black eyes snapped as she saw Louise whom the hunchback had saved from the water.

"Pretty—blind—she'll beg us lots of money!" she said gleefully to Jacques. But to the girl she pretended aid, and her leathern, liquor-coated voice proclaimed:

"No friends, eh, Dearie? Then I'll take care of you!"

Only poor Pierre sympathized with Louise's awful grief in being thrown adrift on Paris through the violent disappearance of her beloved sister. He trembled to think what knavery his wicked kinsfolk meant, though he himself was their helpless slave; the target of kicks, cuffs, and the robbery of all his earnings.

La Frochard led the way to their dank and noisome den, opening from a street trap-door and giving at the other extremity on a sort of water-rat exit underneath the pier. She handed Louise down the steps and taking her things remarked in a self-satisfied tone: "Here are your lodgings, Dearie!"

The old woman arrayed herself in

Louise's shawl, and grinned as she tried on the girl's widespread garden hat. She flung the girl about roughly, even choking her. To heighten the rosy picture of great wealth to acorue, she took a deep draught of cognac from her loved black bottle. Poor Louise sank down to deep slumber, from which neither the noisy potations of La Frochard and Jacques, nor their cursing and abuse of the hunchback Pierre, sufficed to awaken her.

Next morning the hag pulled the blind girl out of the rough bed and dressed her in beggar's garments.

"You must go out now on the street with us and sing!" she said.

". . . But you promised to help me find Henriette . . ." said the poor girl, piteously.

"We'll find her for you one of these days, but in the meantime you must earn your keep. No—I don't mean, actually beg! You do the singing, and I'll do the begging."

"Never!" cried Louise. "You may kill me if you will, but I'll not be a street beggar. Why, the very first person we meet, I'll ask to save me and inform the police!"

"I'll fix you, my fine lady!" screamed La Frochard, throwing her from her. "Come, Jacques," she said to her ruffian son, "we'll trying a means of making her mind!" Together they seized and started dragging her to the steps of a sub-cellar. Tremblingly Pierre urged them to desist, but they cast him aside.

Louise was thrust into the dungeon and the trap closed. Black bread and a cup of water was to be her prison fare. Still moaning "Henriette! Henriette!" she groped along the slimy walls and tried footing of the mingled mud and straw.

Horrors! What were the creeping things she sensed, though sightless? Two raced under her petticoat, one nibbled at her shoe. She jumped high in air and screamed outright.

Rats! They were upon her again, almost swarming. She fled to a corner, leaped on a pile of rags, literally fought them off with both hands! Her screams echoed through the upper den, to the anguish of Pierre and the mocking laughter of La Frochard and Jacques . . .

Pitiably broken, Louise was pulled out of the vile sink a few hours later, pledging

wildly to obey the least of the hag's commands.

La Frochard knew that her conquest was complete.

Henceforth the girl would be but as a lay figure in her hands—a decoy to lure the golden charity of the rich and sympathetic.

As for Jacques, that ruffian was now eyeing the blind lass closely, and muttering:

"Not bad-looking—I'll see to it no other man gets her!"

He slapped his knife villainously.

CHAPTER VII

TANGLED SKEINS

Henriette Girard had not only been saved from dishonor by Chevalier de Vaudrey, but she had won a devoted friend. Through his connections, the Chevalier knew much that was passing in the half-world. The mystery of the happenings at the coach house was cleared by him.

"Your cousin M. Martin," he said, "was found drugged in a wineshop to which presumably the man La Fleur had enticed him. It was easy then for La Fleur to pose as Martin and kidnap you.

"I grieve to say it, abductions of the poor and friendless are common with the roues of fashion. Their families are of such influence that the police rarely interfere.

"But there will be an end of this—if I mistake not," said the Chevalier, "the people mean to put an end to these seignorial 'privileges'!"

It was in one of his frequent talks at the simple lodgings to which he had conducted her the night of Bel-Air. Swiftly they had

retraced the steps of the stricken Louise even to the pier edge over the darkling Seine. Horrified and trembling, Henriette feared the worst.

"It is not likely she was drowned," said the Chevalier gravely. "Someone must have been about, to save her. Do not be discouraged, Mademoiselle, if our search for Louise takes several days. We are without a clew—groping, like her, in the dark. But we shall find her, never fear!"

The confident words gave tiny comfort to the elder girl as he bade his adieux in the parlor of the respectable lodging house he had found for her—the same caravansary (had they but known it) that housed the then obscure Maximilien Robespierre.

She strove to thank him for his kindness when he interrupted her: "Don't thank *me*, Mademoiselle, I owe *you* a debt of gratitude, for you have restored to me ideals sweet as childhood!"

Unconsciously the young people standing there, drew closer to one another until their lips met. Each was almost too astonished for words. Fine breeding came to de Vaudrey's aid. He apologized—and promised not to let it happen again!

Sincerity spoke in the young man's earnest eyes and his respectful kiss of her small hand at parting.

Was indeed this youthful cynic transformed by the flower-like influence of the girl?

He went away all eagerness to pursue the lost sister's quest, promising that no stone —police or other—should be left unturned in the search.

And here—where the orphans' eventful epoch becomes entwined with the lives of the great and with the darkening storm and impending passion of the Revolution—it is well to acquaint our readers further with the de Vaudreys.

Count de Linieres of Touraine had been married—many years before the date of this story—to Mlle. de Vaudrey, the heiress of a great fortune. A skeleton ('twas rumored) rattled in the Vaudrey closet. Certainly there was heritage of hates as well as gold.

A tenant Jean Setain, who came to the Paris mansion to pay his rent, made a scene. He told of the cruelties long ago inflicted on his father by the Countess'

father—for some trifling trespass on seigniorage, *boiling lead in the unfortunate's veins*—and the angry Count, after a stern rebuke, had him ejected. Jacques-Forget-Not (such was his queer nickname) departed, vowing vengeance.

Having ample wealth, the Count desired preferment. The post of Minister of Police was a steppingstone. He accepted it whilst visions of a grand alliance for his nephew, Chevalier de Vaudrey, pointed to dukedom or even princely rank as the family's goal. It thus vexed Linieres exceedingly that the Chevalier should have been mixed up in a duel about an unknown girl. He believed it a clever stroke to hire Picard, the Chevalier's own valet, to spy upon him.

"How is your master's conduct?" asked the Count.

"Scandalous, perfectly scandalous!" replied Picard in a tone of deep dejection. "Once indeed he had a few gentleman associates and went to gay parties, but now he is quite moral, and just as studious as a lawyer's clerk. Really I must leave the Chevalier," continued Picard, "his principles are such as I cannot accept!"

"Then I will re-engage you—on one con-

dition. That is, that you remain a while with my nephew and tell me everything he does. I have heard, on the contrary, that—"

Picard almost danced a pas seul. "Oh, that is the way the wind lies! The sly dog!—And I thought of leaving him. She must be a saucy and jaunty little minx, whoever she is! Oh, yes, I will find out everything that you require."

With eye to keyhole the valet reporter saw the frequent innocent parleys of Maurice and Henriette, which he construed as an intrigue. He was quite ecstatic with happiness now. The police Prefect, finding his suspicions privately confirmed, bluntly refused police aid to the Chevalier's hunt for Louise. He spoke pointedly and (as he hoped) with effect:

"Monsieur, you must give up your association with these common people. I have other plans for you that will shortly mature."

The angry Count could not be crossed. De Vaudrey's sole hope lay in his Aunt.

Ceaselessly Henriette spent her days in trying to trace Louise. Her quest became

the neighborhood gossip. Strangers interested themselves and offered clues to herself and the Chevalier—clues that proved quite futile.

To her doorstep a great pock-marked man, bushy-browed and of knob-like visage, was walking one day with her finicky dandified neighbor M. Robespierre. As he passed, the titan turned and inquired kindly:

"Are you the little girl who lost her sister?"

He spoke with a gentle sympathy that touched her and even his cursing reference to the abductions: "Damned aristocrats! The people are going to stop that sort of thing!" did not phase her, for she looked up into his face and trustfully replied:

"You are such a big man I should think you could do almost anything!"

Robespierre was pawing at the pock-marked one's coat, and finally succeeded in yanking him around. The broad back of the giant being turned to her, our little sparrow of a Henriette noiselessly departed —to the evident disappointment of the big man who looked yet again and found her place empty!

The big man had run across Chevalier de Vaudrey also, and the two had struck up a friendship. Moved by the pitiful sight of a starveling crowd gazing into a bakery, Maurice had rushed in and bought an armful of loaves which he distributed, adding gold louis for the wretched mothers of families. The pock-marked one had been a spectator. He stopped the Chevalier, shook his hand warmly, and remarked: "If more of the aristocrats were like *you*, things would be different!"

From these scenes of low life, let the reader pass for a few moments to the Salon de la Paix at Versailles, where King Louis XVI received petitioners.

We in America who have no awe of royalty perceive that the luckless King was simply a square peg in a round hole. He loved locksmithy, hunting, and home; would have been a successful inventor, pioneer, or bourgeois parent. In the chair of State, on this day of petitions, his head and hand busied themselves with a wonderful new doorlock he had devised.

"Sire," said the suppliant de Linieres, "in the matter of the grand alliance betwixt my

nephew Chevalier de Vaudrey and your ward Princesse de Acquitaine—"

The monarch nodded absentmindedly.

"Oh, yes, yes! Of course. As you say—" With a courtly wave of the hand, the monarch indicated the waiting heiress on his right. She curtsied low in acceptance of the royal command.

"Let the young man marry her, and accept a place in my royal entourage—But now that this little matter is settled," continued the King with a return to his former animation, "I invite you to examine my latest invention, an unpickable lock, which I have here!"

The grave comedy of eulogy on the royal locksmithing was played by the delighted suppliant according to all the rules.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HONOR OF THE FAMILY

Daily the young Chevalier developed a warmer interest in the sweet and pure young girl at the faubourg lodgings. Always his visits brought a little delicious heart-flutter to Henriette, though not unmixed with mourning o'er lost sister. And as a result of these idyllic meetings, ambitious plans appeared to him abhorrent.

About this time the Countess de Linieres, calling one day day at her husband's ministerial offices, learned of his purposes.

"I was about to come to you," said the Count, "but you have anticipated me. I desire to speak with you on the subject of your nephew, the Chevalier de Vaudrey, and to ask you to prepare him for the marriage which the King—"

"Wishes to impose on him," interrupted the Countess bitterly.

"Impose on him?" repeated de Linieres. "It is a magnificent alliance, which will complete the measure of the distinguished

(D. W. Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm)
PIERRE BECOMES THE DEVOTED WORSHIPPER OF LOUISE WHOM HE HAS SAVED FROM THE RIVER.

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honors with which His Majesty deigns to favor us."

"Have you spoken to the Chevalier yet?"

"No, but I am expecting him every moment, and I wished to talk with him in your presence."

As if this conversation had some influence over him, de Vaudrey entered at this moment.

"Ah, Chevalier!" exclaimed the Count. "I am glad to see you. The Countess and myself have an important communication to make to you."

De Vaudrey looked at his uncle in surprise. The latter was positively beaming. Big with the prospective grandeur of his house, he hesitated momentarily over the manner of delivering it.

"My dear Maurice," said the Count finally, "the King did me the honor to receive me yesterday, and he spoke of you."

"Of me?" asked de Vaudrey in surprise.

"He takes a great interest in you," continued de Linieres, now speaking quickly. "He wishes you to accept a position at court, and desires at the same time that you should marry."

"Marry?" asked de Vaudrey, as though

he could not believe his uncle really meant what he said.

The Countess waited as anxiously for de Vaudrey's answer as did her husband, though for a different reason. She loved the young man before her, and his happiness and well-being were very dear to her.

"My dear nephew," she said kindly, "I see that this news surprises you. Yet there is no fear that the King's choice will do violence to your feelings. The lady whom His Majesty has chosen, has youth, beauty and fortune."

"In proof of which I have only to tell you that his choice is Princesse—" the Count attempted to say, but was interrupted by the Chevalier.

"Do not name her," he said excitedly.

"Why not?" asked his uncle in astonishment.

"Because I refuse to marry!"

The effect of these momentous words was quite diverse upon the uncle and the aunt of the young man.

For the moment the haughty nobleman could not understand why his nephew-by-marriage should reject the flattering proposal, such an easy and agreeable road to

place and fortune. Soon rising anger got the better of his surprise, and minding Picard's reports on the Chevalier's conduct, his thought was:

"Ah, that's the secret—he prefers his libertine courses to assured fortune!"

But the Aunt, with a woman's ready wit, understood there could be but one reason to such a decided refusal, and knew that he must be already in love.

Countess de Linieres loved the Chevalier as if he were her own son. Quickly she shot the youth a warning look to prevent if possible a verbal passage of arms. But it was already too late.

"You dare to disobey the King—" thundered Count de Linieres, in righteous wrath, backed (as the others well knew) by the triple authority of household, police and royal cachet.

"My sword is my King's," flashed the handsome youth resolutely, "but my will must remain my own!

"I will go to His Majesty," he contined passionately. "I will thank him for his goodness, place my services at his disposal. My devotion, my life are his, but my affec-

tions are my own, and I wish to remain—free!"

"Free!" exclaimed the Count scornfully. "Free to lead a life of dissipation which you may not always be able to hide from the world."

These words, which implied so much, stung the noble-hearted de Vaudrey more than any words of anger or reproach could have done.

"There is nothing in my life to hide," he said proudly but impatiently, "nothing for which I have reason to blush."

"Are you sure of that, Chevalier?" asked the Count, in a tone that plainly said the speaker knew differently. Conscious of his own uprightness, this doubt cast upon his word was more than the Chevalier could bear, and he advanced toward his uncle with a menacing air.

"Monsieur!" he began, boldly, "I cannot—"

"Maurice! my husband!" exclaimed the Countess, as she stepped between the two men to prevent those words being spoken which would have led to an encounter. "Defer the conversation for the present. Permit me to speak to Maurice."

"Very well," said de Linieres sternly. Then turning to the Chevalier he said, in a voice which he had never before used to his nephew: "We will return to this another time. You will remember that as head of the family its honor is confided to my care, and I will not suffer any one to sully it with a stain."

De Vaudrey had nearly lost all control of his temper. In a moment the outbreak which the Countess was so anxious to avoid would have broken forth, had not the Count without giving his nephew time to speak said quickly:

"I leave you with the Countess. I hope that your respect and affection for her will cause you to lend more weight to her counsels than you are disposed to give to mine."

As if fearing that he might have tried the young man's temper too far, or that he did not wish to prolong a useless scene, the Count left the room. De Vaudrey was alone with his Aunt.

The Countess went up to the noble-looking young man, and taking his hand in hers, asked in a sweet, winning voice:

"Who is this woman you love? What obstacle prevents the avowal of your pas-

sion? If it is only a matter of fortune, take mine; it is all at your disposal, and I will give it to you cheerfully."

"Ah, where shall I find a heart like yours?" exclaimed the Chevalier in a voice trembling with emotion. "You have divined my secret. I adore a young girl as charming as she is pure. Yet never have I dared to whisper my passion!"

"Her name—her family?" asked the Countess eagerly.

"She was born of the people," said de Vaudrey proudly, yet tenderly. "She is an orphan and lives by the labor of her hands."

The Countess, who had never for a moment imagined such an answer to her question, was surprised, and she showed plainly that grief was mingled with her surprise.

"And you would make such a woman your wife?" she asked reproachfully.

"Do not judge her until you have seen her," entreated the Chevalier. "Consent to see her, and then advise me."

The young man took the Countess's hands in his, and looked imploringly into her face.

But his Aunt turned away from him with a gesture of sorrow.

"In such a marriage," she said sadly, "there can be no happiness for you, and for her, only misery. Alas! I know too well the result of those unequal unions. You must renounce her. You owe obedience to your family and your King." She burst into a flood of tears.

Diffidently the young man sought to comfort the Countess whose emotion seemed to have its spring in some hidden sorrow. He promised at last for her sake to consider again the horribly odious proposal of a State marriage, and drying her tears as well as he could, went his way, a victim of torn desires and intensest anguish. . . .

CHAPTER IX

FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE

The giant stranger who had talked to Henriette and made friends with de Vaudrey was Jacques Danton. He and his colleague, Maximilien Robespierre, were destined to be the outstanding figures of the French Revolution. It is worth while to stop here for a little and consider these two men in their historical aspects and for the profound influence which they exerted on the lives of our characters.

As the storm clouds blacken the sky and the sullen sea (not yet lashed to fury) is ridged in deep, advancing breakers, the mariner's eye discerns these stormy petrels flying about or momentarily perched on the masts of the Ship of State.

Mark them well—Danton and Robespierre: today, merely "esurient advocates," petty men of law come up from the provinces to win their fortunes in Paris; tomorrow, leaders of faction; some months or years later, the rulers of France!

Danton—"the huge, brawny figure,

through whose black brows and rude flattened face there looks a waste energy as of Hercules not yet furibund."

Robespierre—aptly described as the meanest man of the Tiers Estat: "that anxious, slight, ineffectual-looking man, under thirty, in spectacles; his eyes, troubled, careful; with upturned face, snuffing dimly the uncertain future-time; complexion of a multiplex atrabiliar color, the final shade of which may be the pale sea-green!"

Such were they, afterwards to be known respectively as "the pock-marked Thunderer" and the "sea-green Incorruptible" of the Revolution. The slight, fox-like man had got himself elected to the States-General which in May, 1789, convened at Versailles to take up the troubled state of the country, whilst the lion-like and fiery Danton was the president of the Cordeliers electoral district of Paris—the head of a popular faubourg faction, not yet of power in the State.

The new helmsmen of the State, headed by Mirabeau, steered with considerable success among waters as yet but partly roiled. At Versailles an outward and visible Liberalism triumphed. The Third Estate or

Commons, consolidating its authority as a permanent assembly, took measures to end the national bankruptcy and tried to cope with the awful menace of starvation. It was a bourgeois body, thinly sprinkled with members of the nobility and clergy; its aim, to abolish the worst seigniorial abuses, restore prosperity, and support the throne by a system of constitutional guarantees.

But when the Storm broke, it was not at Versailles where these lawgiving Six Hundred debated the state of the Nation, but at Paris that the group known as "Friends of the People" lashed the popular discontents to unmeasured and ungovernable fury.

It begins in the Palais Royal where "there has been erected, apparently by subscription, a kind of Wooden Tent, most convenient—where select Patriotism can now redact resolutions, deliver harangues, with comfort, let the weather be as it will. Lively is that Satan-at-Home! On his table, on his chair, in every cafe, stands a patriotic orator; a crowd round him within; a crowd listening from without, open-mouthed, through open door and window; with 'thunders of applause for every sentiment of more than common hardiness.'"

Strange that in a Royalist garden should sprout the seeds of a great Revolution! Stranger the crowds that gathered there, and the leaders both popular and Royalist —among the former, our fiery friend Danton, our cautious, snuffling Robespierre, and the boy of genius Camille Desmoulins, Danton's "slight-built comrade and craft-brother, he with the long curling locks, with the face of dingy blackguardism, wondrously irradiated with genius!"

General Lafayette and Minister from America Thomas Jefferson came there too now and again, to watch the crowds and hear the speeches. Symbols of America's newly won freedom, they were objects of almost superstitious veneration to the agitators for an enfranchised France. Danton, Desmoulins and the rest crowded around them, eager to shake their hands and listen to their comments. In particular, Lafayette's sword—the gift of the American Congress a decade before, excited their admiration.

"From America's Congress!" repeated Danton fervently as he eyed the inscription on the scabbard. "Why, that's the kind of Government we want over here!" Tears

came into the Frenchman's eyes, to think of the Liberty that Lafayette had helped to win.

The Palais Royal gardens were the property of the King's cousin, Louis Phillipe. Disgusted with not being in the councils of the monarch and leaning to democracy, he permitted the place to be used for public promenades, lovers' meetings—and popular harangues. Friends of the People, Friends of Phillipe, and Friends of the King freely rubbed elbows. The popular tide set so strongly that none dared openly oppose the demagogic orators. A bread famine had descended upon Paris. The scarcity of wheat and flour was an ever-present theme; the oppression of autocracy and seigniorage, another. The cry for direct action always woke echo in the popular breast, sick over the delays of the Versailles lawgivers, and nourishing the hope of seizing pelf and power, rescuing their kinsfolk from the prisons, and beating down the Kingship and aristocracy to relinquish privileges and abate the hardships of the Common Man!

Plain, embittered envy stalked abroad, too—envy of the aristocrats' grand homes and unparalleled luxury, their fine equip-

ages and clothing, costly foods and wines, their trains of lackeys and menials, the beauty and joie-de-vivre of their sons and daughters! The mechanic, the storekeeper, the unskilled laborer, the ranks of unemployed, and the submerged tenth obliged to live by their wits or starve, were as fuel to the spark of the orators' lightning.

'Twas unlike a well-ordered land wherein each one receives the well-merited reward of toil. Justice was not in the body politic. Tyranny, extravagance and bankruptcy on the part of the ruling class had wiped out the margin of plenty. Black ruin seemed to impend for all. It was a case of starve—or unite against the rulers and oppressors of society. Danton, the thunderer of mighty speech, dominated these gatherings, aided and abetted by the eagle-like Desmoulins and the crafty Robespierre.

"With the People's government," his swelling periods resounded, "there shall be no common man, no aristocrat—no rich nor poor—but all brothers—brothers—brothers!" Imagine if you can the fire-drama of his recital of generations of cruelties and wrongs—his picture of their miserable lot and of the envied aristocrats' pleasures—

and then consider the pitch of frenzied republicanism to which this wonderful fraternal climax uplifted them! With crash of thunder and wrack of the elements the Storm must break, directly the popular feeling found immediate object of its ire.

CHAPTER X

THE ATTACK ON DANTON

But the royalists were not idle. Their spies attended the meetings. Their swordsmen provoked street encounters with popular leaders.

They had always coped with popular ferments by picking off the individual leaders, and they did not doubt their ability to do the same thing now. As Danton spoke, an influential Royalist, pretending to handclap his sentiments, privately signaled to a number of these "spadassins" or killers.

On his way home from the meeting Danton was attacked in the lonely street. He backed up to a house porch, quickly drew his own sword, and with herculean strength managed to cut down five or six spadassins of the advance party.

Then he fled to the house where Henriette and also Robespierre lodged, rushed in and up the stairs. The following company were almost upon him. Their shouts and cries could be heard below.

Danton plumped into the first door at the left of the stair-head. He was there when Henriette, who had been momentarily away, returned to her room.

"The spies—spadassins—they would take my life—" He was wounded. It was with a difficult hoarseness that he spoke.

The little homekeeper put a warning finger to mouth. Running past him to the door, she slipped out and closed it. She withdrew to the back of the hall, and came forward nonchalantly as the assassins reached the hallway.

Rapier at her throat, the leader put the silent but terrible question. Henriette's heart jumped. She managed not to show her terror.

"I saw a man going up those stairs three steps at a time!" she lied superbly, pointing to the floor above.

The company ran up the third-floor stairs on the double jump. As they vanished, she was inside her rooms again and with the quarry.

Minutes passed. The spadassins searched the top garrets. They sought the roof, saw escape was impossible that way. Then they

(D. W. Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm")

MARQUIS DE PRAILLE PLYING HIS ART WITH THE LADIES.

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clattered down the stairs. The leader hesitated at Henriette's door.

"Faugh!" he said. "The girl is just a simpleton, she couldn't have tricked us!"

At his command the men marched down —to encounter unexpectedly a company of national gendarmes that had been hurriedly summoned to the scene of the disturbance.

In the porch melee Danton's side had been painfully slashed. Despite the pain, he recognized his little preserver and thanked her. Still holding his hand to his side and half-reeling, he moved to go. Now that all semed quiet, he proposed to rid her of the compromising presence of a man in her room.

Henriette seized him with her little arms.

"No, no, you can't go!" she said with a little smile of divine pity. "Better a little gossip about me than that you should lose your life." Henriette locked the door!

She strove to carry the disabled giant to the nearest chair. Leaning heavily on her, he walked with an effort and plumped down on it. One of his arms was around her. She tried to free it, but it clung. With hands and knees she crawled out backward from the unconscious embrace.

It was the work of but a few minutes to wash and bind his wound. Next she spread a pallet on the floor, assisted him to it, wrapped him warmly, and with a kind "Good night!" left him to go to her little boudoir. . .

That same night the spadassins were met and disarmed by the gendarmes who (largely owing to Danton's eloquence) espoused the people's side. And that is why Monsieur Robespierre, his confrere, was abroad very early, without fear of assassins, and nosing for news.

"I hear Danton was in a little trouble last night!" gossiped the slick citizen with his landlady. "The fight was in this very house, was it not?"

The landlady, it seemed, was ignorant of Danton's refuge. But Robespierre suspected. He decided to investigate, being a stickler for propriety. Mounting the stairs stealthily, he knocked at Henriette's door.

The girl and the man were at their leave-taking. Few words were spoken. The giant clasped both her little hands in his great paws.

"What you have done for me I shall never forget!" he was saying.

"Oh, if I had a great kind brother like this!" was her sudden thought.

"Whisht!" she whispered vocally as the knock was heard. Again the little gesture of warning finger to mouth.

She stole to the keyhole and thought she recognized the habiliments of her neighbor the dandy. Motioning Danton back out of sight she opened the door on the crack, closed it as she slipped through, and encountered the bowing and smirking Robespierre.

"A man escaped from the spadassins here last night—did he find refuge with you?"

"You are mistaken, Monsieur. I am quite alone."

"May I just see? Very intimate friend of mine, I am sure."

"No, you *may not!*" Henriette quickly reentered, and slammed and locked the door on the future Dictator of France. 'Twas only a little door slam, but it re-echoed later, even at the Gates of Death! Rubbing his long nose Robespierre took snuff.

"Sh-h, he is still there!" whispered the girl to Danton, with another look through keyhole. Presently steps were heard going downstairs.

"I think he is gone!" she said, verifying her statement by again opening the door and finding the coast clear.

Danton, with a final good-by, went his way.

The sneak, however, had retraced his downstairs steps with cat-like tread. In an alcove of the back hall he had found a hiding post.

As Danton's broad back descended down the steps, a vulpine head peered out of the alcove, and Robespierre's cunning, self-satisfied look showed that he recognized Henriette's visitant.

CHAPTER XI

LOUISE BEFORE NOTRE DAME

In the days following her immurement in the dreadful sub-cellar, Louise became the Frochards' breadwinner. Her pathetic blindness, lovely face and form, and sweet young voice attracted sympathy from each passer-by. The offerings all went into the capacious pocket of La Frochard, whence indeed most of them were stolen or cajoled by her worthless scamp of a Jacques.

The old hag feared only lest she lose her precious acquisition of the blind girl. She guarded her ceaselessly, and warded off dangerous questioners.

It was not easy, however, to avoid the good Doctor from La Force, who gave them a donative and looked at the girl with deep professional interest. Despite the beggar's tactics, he insisted on examining the pupils, then called La Frochard aside.

"Don't encourage her too much," said the old gentlemen kindly, "but bring her to me. I am quite sure that she can be cured."

Rejoining Louise and smiling her wheed-

ling beggar's smile at the departing Doctor, the features of Widow Frochard suddenly contorted in black rage—she shook her fist at the physician directly his back was turned. Monstrous—to restore sight, and thus make the girl worthless as object of charity! La Frochard felt she had good reason for her rage.

"Can the Doctor do anything?" ventured Louise to the hag, timidly.

"No, he said your case is hopeless."

They were standing now near the snowy steps of Notre Dame, awaiting worshippers whose pity would be stirred by the girl's misfortune. Half-drunken Jacques had reeled out of a cabaret to exact his share of the plunder. Mother and first-born cursed heartily the scissors-grinder Pierre who came limping up, saying he could get no jobs on account of the bitter cold, wintry day. Kicking the cripple and twisting Louise's arm were the favorite pastimes of Jacques and the Widow.

On this occasion the hag snatched the covering from the wretched girl's shoulders and put it around her own. "You'll shiver better without that shawl!" she said, brut-

any setting the scene for the worshippers' charity.

"Jacques and I," she continued, "are going to get a little drink to warm our frozen bodies.

"Guard her there, you good-for-nothing Pierre, or I'll break every bone of your body!" They departed to spend the Doctor's gold-piece.

Pierre tried vainly to comfort the girl. He could but find her a seat in a pile of snow! He warmed her hands with his own, strove to speak cheering words. But teeth were chattering, and her frail form was quivering as with the ague.

A great wave of pity and love overwhelmed the cripple. He peeled off his coat, beneath which were but the thinnest rags. He wrapped it around her, saying:

"There, there! this will help you keep warm. I really do not need it—I—I-am-not-c-c-cold!"

His own teeth were chattering now, and his pinched features were purple.

The blind girl touched his icy arm, half exposed by his ragged shirt, as she rose to sing for the charity of those who attended mass.

"No, no, Pierre," she cried, removing the coat from her shoulders, "I will not let you freeze. Oh, how selfish I am to permit you to suffer, who have been so kind to me!"

Rejecting his entreaties, she made him put it on again, hiding her own suffering.

"Hearken! there sounds the organ for the recessional!" she continued. "Soon the people will be coming out. I will sing the same songs that my sister Henriette and I used to sing. Perhaps some one will recognize the melody, and lead me back to her!"

A beautifully majestic, ermined figure stepped graciously out of the church, as La Frochard rejoined Louise and began whining: "Charity! In the name of God, Charity!" whilst the girl's voice lifted up in an old plaintive melody.

The lady was the Countess de Linieres, returning from her devotions.

The song evoked memories of a bitter past and of a long lost daughter snatched from her in infancy. Bending over poor Louise, she asked: "My child, can you not see me?"

"No, Madame, I am blind," was the low, sad answer.

A strange sympathy stirred in the Coun-

tess for this girl. There seemed to be some hidden link between them, the nature of which baffled her. She felt the impulse to protect and cherish—was it the voice of Mother Love obscurely speaking?

"Alas!" said Louise. "Blindness is not the worst of my misfortunes. I-I—"

La Frochard administered a terrible pinch that pulled Louise away, then "mothered" her cutely. "We are starving, my beautiful lady," she whined, "and the poor girl is out of her head. What is that you say? *Not my daughter?* Yes, indeed she is—the precious—and the youngest of seven. Charity, charity! In the name of God, charity!" she sniffled.

Reluctantly Countess de Linieres stifled the impulse to mother this kindred and hapless young being, averred to be the beggar's daughter. She placed a golden louis on the palm of the singer, saying:

"Give this to your mother, child."

CHAPTER XII

LOVE, MASTER OF HEARTS

The Count's demands brought to a head a resolve that had taken possession of Chevalier de Vaudrey's heart and soul. Always the picture of the sweet Norman girl he had saved from de Praille's foul clutches was in his waking thoughts, of nights he dreamed a blessed romance! He recked not of the Count's displeasure, sorrowed that he must displease his Aunt as sorely. The only bar was that a vision of the lost Louise stood, as it were, between him and his beloved Henriette.

Now that he had come to her to speak of his proposal, the little heart still quested for the lost sister.

"Don't you ever think of anyone but her?" he asked.

A negative shake of the golden head and ringleted curls was the answer, though the cupid mouth and the blue eyes smiled with tenderness. They stood very close to another, like poles of a magnet twixt which a spark flashes.

Silently Maurice drew from his pocket a ring. 'Twas of pure gold, a lovely and exquisite bauble, whereof the two little claws clasped a golden heart. He handed it to Henriette, who took it with a happy smile till she realized its meaning as betrothal.

A wave of color overspread her cheek. The heir of the de Vaudreys to give himself to her! Pride and love mingled in her thoughts.

Yes, to throw himself away on a Commoner girl—he meant it. Flashed the picture on her mental retina of the little solemn oath to Louise. What he asked was impossible—for him and for her.

Henriette handed back the ring.

"Marry you—an aristocrat! Why, that would ruin you in the eyes of *all the world!*"

He was down on his knees, pleading, agonized, distressed, looking for some sign of relentment from the beauteous little head that seemed rigidly to repress emotion.

"Then you d-o-n-'t l-o-v-e m-e?" he faltered at last, rising.

"No!" was the reply, in a firm but very small voice.

The broken Chevalier started slowly for

the door. He turned slightly and caught the sound of sobs.

Wheeling around, he saw her arms half stretched towards him. He bounded back.

He was now kissing the hem of her garments, her gloves, her roses, her fingertips, and crying extravagantly, almost shouting the words: "You DO love me!"

Gently Henriette imparted a maiden's delicate kiss on his cheek. "When Louise is found—" she was half sobbing in his arms, "—dreams—yes—perhaps you might find a way to bring them true!"

But the gallant gentleman jumps forward to the end of the dream. Youthfully swearing that Louise will soon be found, he visions their exquisite happiness as of tomorrow or the day after. He holds her delightedly, then draws her closer. The kindred magnets are one.

Lips meet lips in soul-kiss that cause the maidenly head to hide under elbow in confusion. Kissing almost every part and furnishing of that dear second self—vowing never to rest till he brings Louise and takes Henriette—the ecstatic cavalier is gone!

Alas for the quickly visioned dream-facts of twenty-four! Full long shall be the in-

terval betwixt the bright Utopia and the heavenly reality:—the dungeon, the Storm, the death chamber and e'en the shining axe shall intervene.

A great Nation shall have thrown off its old tyrants and weltered in the blood of new tyranny. What matter? The souls of the girl and the man are one, they shall be faithful unto the End!

CHAPTER XIII

THE RECOGNITION

The Chevalier de Vaudrey sought his Aunt and begged her to see his beloved before finally siding with the Count against him. The incident of the chance encounter with the blind girl had stirred the Countess, awakened renewed pity for hapless love such as she herself had once experienced. She decided to visit Henriette, if only to divert her from the seemingly mad project of a union with the Chevalier.

Meantime Count Linieres had decided to exercise the power of the dread lettres de cachet. In the France of that day, personal rights were unknown. Subject only to the King's will, no other warrant than the Prefect's signature was required to send anyone into exile or to life imprisonment. The means that Linieres now had in mind were often used to quell rebellious lovers.

He would brand this inconvenient, presumptuous Henriette Girard as a fallen woman, imprison her at La Salpetriere, and then ship her as a convict to Louisiana. That would get rid of her, truly!

In the meanwhile the Chevalier, if disobedient, could cool his heels in the prison tower of the royal fortress at Caen. After a while, he might indeed see reason and think better of marrying the Princesse de Acquitaine!

He summoned the Chevalier. The autocratic Count brooked no words; he commanded marriage with the State heiress—or exile!

His nephew refusing, the guards were summoned, the young man gave up his sword, and under their escort he was presently on his way to Caen prison.

Then, summoning a detail of military police, the Count moved to carry out the other part of his plan.

"You are Mademoiselle Henriette Girard?" inquired the Countess kindly on entering the girl's lodgings.

Henriette greeted the distinguished and aristocratic lady with due respect. Making her comfortable in a guest chair, she resumed her sewing and listened.

"I am the aunt of the Chevalier Maurice de Vaudrey." The girl, startled, looked up

from her work. "Marriage between you and the Chevalier is impossible."

"I love him, Madame," replied Henriette, simply.

"Then it is your duty to give him up, since it is the will of the King that he marry Princesse de Acquitaine—"

Henriette paled. For an instant the blue eyes looked near-tigerish, with green and yellow lights. Yet she must save Maurice from the King's wrath.

"If you will make this sacrifice," continued the Countess, "I shall not prove ungrateful with any reward that is in my power."

"Oh, yes, there is!" replied Henriette earnestly. She showed the Countess her sampler, on which she was working the word—

LOUISE

"Louise—that name is very dear to me," replied the Lady softly. She visioned a scene of long ago when an infant Louise had been snatched from her young arms—the arms of a mother deprived of her offspring.

"She is my sister," resumed Henriette—

"lost, wandering and alone, on the streets of Paris. Oh, help me find her, and I—I will do anything you say!" The poor creature sobbed in her double misery.

She pointed to her own eyes in gesture to portray Louise's misfortune: "Blind—so helpless—it was just like taking care of a baby." She told the story of her abduction and the loss of her sister, then of Chevalier de Vaudrey's vain efforts and hers to trace her.

The Countess de Linieres leaned forward in intense sympathy conjoined with a certain weird premonition.

"She isn't really my sister," went on Henriette, "but I owe her the love of a mother and sister combined. She saved us from want and death. My father found her on the steps of Notre Dame—"

A low cry escaped the Countess.

"—where he was about to put me as a foundling, there not being a morsel of food in our wretched home. This other baby was half buried under the snow. He warmed the little bundle against his body and mine—and, rather than let us perish there of the cold, returned homeward with both infants in his arms. Suspended from

the other baby's neck were a bag of gold and this locket—"

The Countess gasped. She put a hand to her heart and seemed about to faint before recovering strength to examine the locket that Henriette handed to her.

It was a miniature that the Prefect's wife recognized as her own!

Opened, it disclosed an aged and yellowed bit of paper, on which the writing was still visible:

HER NAME IS LOUISE
SAVE HER

"My child! My own Louise!" she cried. "—lost, wandering and blind in Paris. Tell me, tell me—" She had almost fainted. The floodgate of tears relieved her pent heart.

Henriette was bending over her now, her arm around her shoulders, trying to comfort.

But the girl herself was near the breaking point. The voice of the loved and absent one seemed to sound in her ears.

Was it an hallucination?

"Singing,—don't you hear?" said Henriette, softly, to the Mother.

The girl brushed a hand across her eyes and tapped her temple.

"In my dreams oft I hear it, my sister's voice. I must be losing my reason!"

Again swelled the notes of the Norman melody, and this time the Mother heard too.

The two sprang to their feet.

Henriette dashed to balcony window. At the end of the street she saw a figure clad in beggar's rags that she thought she knew.

"LOUISE!"

Henriette's cry echoed down the street and impinged on the blind beggar's brain. The outcast ran groping and stumbling forward, no longer singing, but calling "Henriette!" Her keper, Widow Frochard, was not in sight.

The blind girl came nearer. Frochard emerged from a ginshop and tried to head her off. The Mother followed Henriette to the window. The latter encouraged Louise with little cries:

"Don't get excited!"

"It's all right!"

"Wait there!"

"I'll be down in one instant!"

She rushed past the Countess across the room and flung wide the door, on the very brink of happiness.

But a troop of guards stood there to her astonished gaze. The Count de Linieres, standing at their head, pronuonced her name as if reading a warrant: "Henriette Girard!"

The girl drew back, then charged like a little fury on the gunstocks and bosoms of the troopers, pounding them with her fists.

Unable to move this granite-like wall, she dashed back to the balcony eyrie, imploring Louise with both hands.

"Arrest her!" said de Linieres to the soldiers.

Brawny troopers pulled her back as she would have jumped out of the window to the flagging below—and her Louise. Vainly the Countess de Linieres entreated for mercy. They dragged the girl downstairs.

Here again she made a frantic appeal and wild effort to join her blind charge, who was being hurried away in the vise-like grip of La Frochard.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, have pity—let me go to my sister, or I shall lose her again!"

Deaf to her entreaties, they took her to La Salpetriere, this loveliest of virgins, to be immured among the foul characters there!

END OF PART ONE

PART II

CHAPTER XIV

DOWN IN THE DEPTHS

With Henriette condemned to the cruel fate of immurement in a prison for the fallen, the Chevalier trussed up in royal Caen, and his aunt the Countess prostrated by the hag's recapture of and disappearance with the noblewoman's long-lost daughter, blind Louise, 'twould seem as if our characters faced indeed blank walls of ruin, misery and despair, from which no power could rescue them.

In those times, the utter vanishing of persons who incurred police disfavor was no uncommon incident. Often no public charge was made; merely the gossiped whisper that So-and-So lay in Bastille or La Salpetriere "at the royal pleasure," kept the unfortunate faintly in memory till the lapse of years caused him or her to be forgotten. And, sometimes, even, at the prison gate, identity vanished. Did not the celebrated and mysterious Man in the Iron

Mask carry his baffling secret through decades of dungeon death-in-life to the prisoner's dark grave?

Others were silently transported to exile overseas. As England had her Botany Bay, so France had Louisiana. Let us take a glance at La Salpetriere (as Henriette is being dragged there by Count de Linieres' troopers) to look at the sights and scenes of the famous female prison, and contemplate what the inmates had in store.

There was no interesting toil to relieve their unhappy lot, and no distinction was made of the insane, the law-breaking criminal, and the wretched streetwalker or demimondaine. In the court-yard, during the exercise periods, the only talk was of the terms of imprisonment and of the chances of Louisiana. In that gray monotony the ministrations of the charitable Sisters, headed by the saintly Sister Genevieve (who had been born within the walls of the prison), furnished the one bright spot.

"Do not grieve so!" said one of the older inmates who had begged a little needlework, to a novice who was seated on a bench, weeping convulsively with her head in her arms.

"Oh, I can never live such a life as this!" replied the poor girl, giving way to new grief.

"Try to do something or other, 'twill make you forget your troubles."

"I've never done anything in my life—except amuse myself!" replied the ex-grisette.

"That would be precious hard work in this place," said a third speaker, who had passed several years of the dreary inactions of prison life.

"Well, anyhow, I've had my fling!" remarked the newcomer, drying her eyes. "Scores of admirers crowded around me, willing to ruin themselves for my amusement—" she said in a vivacious manner, as she recalled her past triumphs.

"And it all peters down to prison, eating gruel with a wooden spoon," said the cynical old-timer; "then, some day, we shall be treated as those poor creatures were yesterday—hurried off with a guard of soldiers to see us safe on our weary exile—"

"Does the idea of exile frighten you?"

"Who would not be frightened at the idea of being led off amid insults and jeers—condemned to a two months' voyage in the

(*D. W. Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm"*)
ONE OF THE BEAUTIES OF THE GARDEN FETE OF BEL-AIR.

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vilest company—and at the end of it be landed in a wild country to face the alternatives of slavery or a runaway into the savage swamps?"

"Plenty of work to relieve monotony—"

"They say women are scarce out there in Louisiana. Perhaps I shall get a husband, and revenge myself on the male creation that way—"

Their speculations were cut short by the entry of a squad of troopers literally dragging tiny Henriette Girard within the prison walls. Cold and unfeeling at best, these men had no sympathy with their young charge whom they naturally believed to be one of the harpies or half-wits caught in the police dragnet. They thrust her mid the crowd in the courtyard and departed. The great iron doors clanged shut. The gatekeeper turned the massive key. Henriette—without a friend in the world to appeal to—was an inmate of dread La Salpetriere!

Like a flock of magpies the imprisoned demi-mondaines, petty thieves, and grosser criminals for love or for hate, crowded around the girl, inquiring what offence had brought her amongst them.

"I am innocent!"

Her little sobbing cry of self-justification was received with jibes and winks. Was not such the formula of every prisoner? They pressed her for her story. Looking at these ignoble spirits, the girl could not bear to acquaint them with her pure and holy romance.

As she turned away, a new shock met her gaze.

Faugh! What was this physical weakness, this nausea-like repulsion, but the bodily reaction from the tense spiritual agony she had suffered?

Courage! She must look again. That wild woman—hair down, breath gasping, arms weaving threateningly—was coming at her like a murderess. Momentarily Henriette expected the long arms to seize her, the steel-like hands and wrists to choke her.

She looked yet a third time. The crazy "murderess" had veered her course, but what was that other object nearby? A Niobe weeping for her own and the world's sorrows! Or this one over here—a shrieking maniac calling on all Hell's legions for vengeance on fancied enemies! Beyond, gibbering victims of paresis, white-haired

idiots, wasted sufferers from senile dementia.

Not a friendly face, not a kind look nor an understanding eye! Crime, passion, foulness, insanity. The sheer horror of her situation mercifully blotted out consciousness. She sank, a crumpled heap to the floor.

"The girl is sick," said Sister Genevieve, who had entered at this moment and was presently bending over her. "Here, two of you lift her and carry her into the hospital —we shall have the good Doctor from La Force attend her!" Two of the sturdier prisoners bore her away. . .

Beautiful, pitiful Henriette!

The horrors of the madwomen thou facest in Salpetriere; the obscene shouts and curses of the fallen; the fury of the female criminal; the misery of the poor distracted half-wits, where mad and sane are given the same cell:—these shall be but confused phantasmagoria projected on thy sick brain during this prison time before the awful Storm breaks—the lightning strikes —the thunder crashes, and the sharp female called La Guillotine holds thee in its embrace.

From the tumbril shalt thou find and kiss the blind girl, and Maurice de Vaudrey shall accompany thee into the Valley of the Shadow!

CHAPTER XV

LIGHT RAYS IN THE DARKNESS

Henriette was nursed through a severe mental and bodily illness by the Sister Genevieve directed by the visiting prison Doctor, none other than him who had examined the eyes of Louise before Notre Dame.

During this period it was quite impossible for the attendants to get her story. She herself in lucid moments could hardly realize her situation, nor in any wise remember how she had come to it.

But one day new strength seemed to be hers. Feverish and with hair unbound and a wild light in her eyes, she sprang out of her cot, sought Genevieve in the main prison, and knelt before her.

"Oh, Madame!" cried Henriette in imploring accents, "if you are the mistress here, have pity on me, and order them to set me free. I ask you on my knees!"

"You are still ill, my child," said Sister Genevieve tenderly, stroking Henriette's long hair with a gentle, loving touch.

"Certainly you are," confirmed the Doc-

tor, who was just then on his way to the hospital ward. "Why have you left your bed without my permission?"

"Oh, monsieur!" said the poor girl, turning to the gentle-voiced, pleasant-faced man who spoke so kindly, "have you attended me in my illness? Look—thanks to your care—I have recovered!" she affirmed confidently, though her hectic features and weak motions belied it.

"They left me alone for a few moments, and I arose and dressed myself. Now that you see I am quite well, you will tell them to let me go, will you not?"

The Doctor gazed at her compassionately before answering:

"That is impossible. To release you from this place requires a far greater power than mine."

"This place?" asked the young girl in surprise. "Why, what is it? Is it not a hospital?"

"A hospital and a prison," replied the physician gravely.

"A prison!" exclaimed Henriette in terror, striving to remember how she came to be in such a place.

At last the events that preceded her ill-

ness gradually came back to her mind, until she understood all.

"Ah, I remember," she said at length. "Yes, I remember the soldiers who dragged me here, and him who commanded. . . And Maurice—was he too condemned? Alas, poor Louise—my last sight of her showed her in the power of vile, unscrupulous wretches! Oh, dear God, what have I done to be crushed like this!"

She dropped, weeping and wailing, to the floor.

"Sister," said the Doctor, turning away to hide his tears, "this is not a case for my care. You must be the physician here."

"I know virtue and innocence when I see it, surely this child has done nothing worthy of a term at Salpetriere!" replied the kind Genevieve softly, lifting up the stricken girl and embracing her.

"Come, dear, you must rest yet a little longer in order to acquire the full strength so as to be able to tell me everything. Assuredly we will help you!"

In the course of convalescence Henriette told her complete story to Sister Genevieve. The narrative included the girls' journey to

Paris, her kidnapping and rescue, the disappearance of Louise, de Vaudrey's suit and the objections of his family, the recognition of her sister as the Countess's long-lost daughter, Louise's recapture by the beggars, and the peremptory act of the Police Prefect whereby mother and daughter, and beloved foster-sisters, were cruelly parted, and Henriette branded with the mark of the fallen woman by incarceration in La Salpetriere.

Sister Genevieve was strangely moved by it, as was the Doctor to whom she repeated it.

"Against the will of the Police Prefect we can do nothing!" said the Doctor, soberly. "If only his wrath has cooled, we may possibly get her term shortened—"

"What monstrous wickedness!" interrupted the Sister, ordinarily mild and loyal, but worked up to near-democracy by these and other injustices. "To imprison a pure girl—her only offence a nobleman's honorable suit and her own ceaseless search for her blind sister, lost in the streets of Paris!"

"This girl Henriette was her blind sister's sole support," suggested a nurse.

"I had found her—Louise—at the mo-

ment when they arrested me," exclaimed Henriette sorrowfully. "I heard her voice. I saw her. She was covered with rags. Her beautiful golden hair fell in disorder on her shoulders. She was being dragged along by a horrible old woman, who I know ill-treats her—beats her, perhaps, and they would not let me go to her. Now I have lost her forever—forever!"

"Wait a minute, my child," exclaimed the physician, as a sudden thought flashed over him. "I believe I have met that very same girl."

"You, monsieur?" exclaimed Henriette in surprise.

"Yes—yes, a young girl led by an old woman who calls her Louise—"

"Yes—yes, that's her name," and the young girl became breathless with excitement.

"I know the old woman, too," continued the Doctor. "She is called La Frochard—an old hag who goes about whining for alms in the name of Heaven and seven small children.

"Where did I last see them?" he mused. Suddenly he recollected a little scene on the steps of Notre Dame one morning before

mass. "Oh, yes," he continued, "they were begging for charity of the churchgoers at Notre Dame. I noticed that the young girl was blind—professionally interested, I examined her pupils and discovered she was merely suffering from cataracts which could be readily removed. I told the old woman so, asked her to bring the girl for treatment to La Force, but they have never shown up—"

"Quick! Quick!" cried Henriette. "Tell me, Doctor, where Mere Frochard lives?"

"Oh, they inhabit an old boathouse at the end of the Rue de Brissac down on the banks of the river Seine. There's a cellar entrance to their hovel near the Paris-Normandy coach house. But what would you do?" he inquired solicitously.

"Oh, Sir," said Henriette piteously, "if you could use your influence to get me out of here some way, I would—would run there and recover my little lost sister! You don't know how I love her, nor my fears that they will kill her. Please, please—" The little voice broke off in sobs.

Patting the girl's shoulder and smiling at her as if to try to impart confidence in a very difficult matter, the good Doctor drew

apart with Sister Genevieve and conferred earnestly for a few moments. On their return, the physician spoke again:

"'Twould be of no use to invoke the police, as the Count has probably instructed them not to hunt for Louise. Nor is it in our power to release you from here. But we shall get up a petition signed by all of us for your reprieve, very likely Count de Linieres will not venture to refuse it—"

Henriette was overjoyed even with this slender resource, and warmly thanked them. At once her busy little brain laid plans for invading the lair of the Frochards. And then—a most unexpected ray in the darkness—arrived at Salpetriere the quaint valet Picard and brought her comfort too.

No longer a spy for the Count, he had been converted from base suspicion by the Chevalier's honorable suit and the exile the latter had suffered. He now delivered this little message from his master at Caen:

> Dearest, never will I marry anyone but you, my heart's desire! Should I escape, it will be to your arms. Picard knows my secret plan and will tell you—until then, courage! A thousand kisses from your Maurice.

Henriette kissed the little paper fervently.

Countess de Linieres decided to make a clean breast of her wretched past to her husband. "It was not that I-I sinned," she sobbed, kneeling at his feet. "In the sight of God I am innocent, though erring!

"In early girlhood," she continued, "I loved and was loved by a Commoner, a man of the people. The good Cure married us secretly. We were blessed by an infant daughter.

"The family pride of the de Vaudreys was outraged by the so-called dishonor. Two of the clan found our hiding-place and slew my husband, then took my baby Louise from my helpless arms. I was brought back to the chateau and given in marriage to you, after threats of death if I should ever divulge the secret! Twenty years after, I saw my daughter as Louise the blind singer —the girl Henriette, whom you sent to Salpetriere, is her foster-sister. Oh, forgive, forgive—put me away if you wish, but consider what I have suffered! . . ."

The strong man, whom neither the fate of Maurice nor of Henriette had melted, was crying. Gently he lifted up the Countess and clasped her sobbing in his arms.

"If you had only told me before—" was

the only word to which he could give utterance.

The hellish aspect of his persecutions now stood revealed. Count de Linieres, in the act of divine forgiveness, resolved to undo wrongs.

But History struck faster.

The avenger Jacques-Forget-Not annihilated pardons. The Linieres and the other aristocrats were soon to flee for their lives.

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CHAPTER XVI

REVOLUTION IS HERE!

The ex-retainer nicknamed "Forget-Not" bore a baleful grudge because of the cruelties inflicted on his own father many years before by the Countess's father—the cruel punishment of pouring boiling lead into the unfortunate tenant's veins: a proceedure on which the boy Chevalier had been taught to look approvingly.

In fact ever since the elder Jean Setain displeased the then Seigneur of the de Vaudrey estate, the affairs of the tenant family had gone to wrack and ruin until the middle-aged son was little more than a landless beggar and an embodied voice calling for vengeance.

The original parties of the quarrel were dead. But the feud (on the part of Jacques-Forget-Not) had taken on a more personal aspect, because his own sufferings were involved as well as the memory of his father's. He had determined to kill the Chevalier, the Countess and the Count.

In normal times the monomaniac's de-

signs would never have reached fruition. Now the vast public discontents converted the cringing ex-tenant or shrieking beggar into a gaunt, long-haired, ferocious agitator—one of the outstanding crazy figures of Great Crises!

For the Storm—long brewing in seditious Palais Royal or seething faubourg, in the heart and conscience of patriot Dantons, the cunning of Robespierres, the wildness of Desmoulins fire-eaters, the starvation and misery of the people—struck the doomed country with full force.

In the outcome the fat King Louis XVI, the hapless royal family, and the whole supporting system of parasitic aristocracy, were hurled down into black nothingness! The upset released our characters from the horrors of prison immurement, only to plunge them in the more awful tyranny of the New Terror.

Early in midsummer the wildest rumors reached Paris that the Versailles government intended to put down the discontents by weight of sword. Armies were advancing on the city, 'twas averred—cannon and arms were being parked in the commanding

squares; the King's faithful Allemands and Swiss were about to attack the representatives of the people and mow them down.

As a beehive, stirred by over-curious bear or by an invader's stick, seethes and swarms in milling fury before the myriads of angry occupants attack and overwhelm the intruder with their stings, so the seething populace mills in widening and ever widening circles, out to destroy—burn—slay. The ominous drum murmurs to the people of their ancient wrongs. Artisans pick up their nearest implements, the butcher his axe, the baker his rolling pin, the joiner his saw, the iron worker his mallet or crowbar, rushing to join the homicidal throngs. Vengeful leaders like Forget-Not urge them on, directing the milling masses to the central places of the city.

At the Palais Royal gardens, later from the Cafe de Foy, Camille Desmoulins is in his glory. See him "rushing out, sibylline in face; his hair streaming, in each hand a pistol! He springs to a table: the police satellites are eyeing him; alive they shall not take him; not they alive, him alive.

"'Friends, shall we die like hunted hares? Us, meseems, only one cry befits:

(*D. W. Griffiths "Orphans of the Storm"*)
DANTON WELCOMES LAFAYETTE AND JEFFERSON. THE REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICA'S NEW. WON FREEDOM.

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To arms! Let universal Paris, universal France, as with the throat of the whirlwind, resound: To arms! Friends (continues Camille) some rallying sign! Cockades, green one; the color of hope!' As with the flight of locusts, these green leaves; green ribands from the neighboring shops; all green things are snatched and made cockades of . . . . And now to Curtius' image shop there; to the boulevards; to the four winds, and rest not until France be on fire!"

Ancient flint-locks, pikes and lances are replevined, and dance high, minatory, over the heads of the mob. Storerooms of powder and musketry are broken into and swept clean. Behold, now, a still more astonishing sight; a rushing tide of women, impetuous, all-devouring, equipped with brooms and household tools, descending like a snowbreak from all directions upon the Hotel de Ville. "And now doors fly under hatchets; the Judiths have broken the armory; have seized guns and cannon, three money-bags," and have fired the beautiful City Hall of King Henry the Fourth's time!

. . . And where the Storm breaks

fiercest and the cry "Down with Tyrants!" most loudly sounds, there Danton the revolutionist, the pock-marked Thunderer, leads the way, whipping up new fury and moulding them to his will with his appeal 'gainst "Starvation—oppression—ages of injustice—vile prisons where innnocent ones die under autocracy!"

Danton's voice shakes the world.

Thousands upon thousands of commoners gather for the attack on the hated symbol of royal authority, the prison fortress of Bastille.

Look! His impassioned eloquence touches the popular sympathies of the common soldiers who constitute the royal guard. They lower their opposing bayonets, identify their cause with the people's, the exultant throng rushes past.

Hurrah! The Revolution shall sweep on. The King's foreign soldiery are the only loyal ones now. At the side of the Place de Greve the populace throw up barricades. The conflict twixt Kingship and democracy has begun.

The people have won more cannon and more small arms. They rake the loyalist Swiss and Germans with a murderous fire.

The foreign troops fight to the last. They are killed or overwhelmed as the victorious commonalty take possession of the Square. Danton who has directed the proletariat is the popular hero.

Forget-Not has his share of the triumph too. "Come, my men," he yells. "On to the Police Prefect's palace—let us avenge the wrongs of police tyranny!" For in this dreadful hour the baleful Jacques-Forget-Not remembers a private vengeance—his followers need no second urging to haste with him to sack and slaughter . . .

Fox-like, Maximilien Robespierre, the "people's advocate," has watched from a safe recess the issue of the battle. Not for him, the risking of his precious skin! Later, in the councils of the new democratic State, he shall sway men to his purposes . . .

And now the mob, re-enforced by many of the popular soldiery, seeks the Bastille. Our previous description of the system of lettres de cachet and the wholesale imprisonments without warrant of law, will have given readers some idea of the hate with which this fortress of injustice was commonly regarded. Many of the attackers,

no doubt, had friends or relatives immured there. 'Twas the monstrous and visible crime of the Kingship—the object all had immediately in view when crying "Down with tyranny!"

In less than a day the Bastille falls. 'Tis but feebly defended by a few aged veterans and a handful of valiant Swiss. Their first fire kills some of the commoners and lashes the mob to fury. Up on the walls, bastions and parapets, away from the guns at the port holes, crawl some of the more daring attackers. Others bring cannon, preparing to carry the siege by cannonade, investiture and starvation.

The governor, seeing that it is a losing fight, parleys and yields. But, instead of observing the terms of the honorable surrender and safe-conduct, the inrushing mob slays and mutilates a number of the officers and defenders—the first inkling of what murder and rapine the Wild Beast of the Proletariat will commit!

"Set free the victims of the tyrants!" is the sole thought after the lust of blood is satiated. The dungeons are opened, the prisoners brought forth, joy of reunion or pathos of sorrow is the result of these

strange meetings, many of the victims being but the wrecks or shadows of their old selves.

"Set free the victims of tyranny!"

After the Bastille La Salpetriere, the famous female prison, is summoned. Already the inmates are on the qui vive of expectation. Mad and sane are flying about from cells to courtyard, and courtyard to barred windows, like birds in storm-flight.

Impatient, restless little Henriette, between the bars of her cage, is looking out wonderingly on a re-made world. What does it mean? Release? the easy path to her lost Louise?

Pray Heaven it does—

CHAPTER XVII

PRISON DELIVERY—AND AN ENCOUNTER

The jailers deliver the keys; the mob pours tmultuously into the female prison. What cries of joy, what sobs of relief from the saner inmates, as they try to *think* their new, almost incredible jail delivery! What stony, uncomprehending glances or what wild shrieks from the maniacal! Amid this confused throng Picard, who has entered with the crowd to wait upon his mistress, presents a comic figure. He has arrayed himself in the red-and-white striped garb of the proletariat, is trying his best to look a Revolutionary, though all he gets for it are kicks and wallops!

Sense and nonsense mix strangely in the proceedings of the mob. They set up a rude court headed by two horny-handed butchers, the object of which is to separate the innocent from the guilty. But the new red-and-white cockade—superseding the green cockades of the first battle—is the best passport to their favor. Inmates whose friends have provided them with

these Revolutionary badges, are generally turned loose. Shouting and laughing in their glee, they dance out of the prison.

Picard has provided Henriette with his badge, whilst Sister Genevieve and the Doctor vouch to her good character. Henriette kisses the cockade as a sign of fealty to the new order. The brawny judges let her pass. She runs merrily out past the harmless gauntlet of the friendly pikes and lances.

Not so Picard— That luckless valet tries to sneak out past the big chopper of the brawny butcher-judge.

Whir-r! The chopper descends in front of him, almost taking his head off!

Picard executes a strategic retirement to the rear. There! Isn't there seemingly a good chance to crawl out between the other guardian's legs, and thus escape?

Picard tries it.

Alas! the first butcher catches sight of Picard's be-tufted head protruding in this strange manner from under the crotch of his fellow. The Man of Meat grasps Picard firmly by the collar and pulls him forth.

With the other hand he raises the axe to chop the offender's head off, thinks bet-

ter of it, twirls Picard swiftly around, and using the flat of the chopper spanks the rear of the Picard anatomy, sending him sprawling into the limbo.

So that little Henriette's excursion into Freedom is unattended and alone. It is quite unlikely that she bothers about Picard at all. "Louise! Rue de Brissac!" is the sole thought of her whirling little brain, as she speeds on.

Just where **is** the Frocards' cellar door? Certainly she has never noticed it in her frequent searches of the Pont Neuf district. But perhaps some one can tell her— She is in the Rue de Brissac now, almost at the spot where she herself was kidnapped and Louise was lost.

A good-looking daughter of the people comes hurrying by.

"Can you tell me where the Frochards live?" inquires Henriette eagerly.

The girl points to an almost indistinguishable trap-door, nearly covered with straw, in front of one of the houses. "There!" she says. Henriette presses the newcomer to accompany her. "Sorry, I haven't a minute!" negatives the other, has-

(*D. W. Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm"*)
JACQUES FORGET-NOT, SWEARS VENGEANCE ON THE FAMILY OF THE DE VAUDREYS. THE COUNT DE LINIERES AND THE CHEVALIER DE VAUDREY HEAR HIS THREATS.

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tening off in spite of Henriette's efforts to detain her.

Henriette opens the trap-door of the cellar where the Frochards lodged, and peers within. Courageously she goes down the steps. Sympathy and horror struggle in the thought of Louise being an inmate of this foul place.

What is her disgust then to encounter the wart-faced and moustachioed hag who is its proprietor! Quickly Henriette tells La Frochard of her information, and demands Louise.

"I don't know any such person," the hag lies, with ready effrontery. "You must be mistaken!"

But Henriette's eyes are gazing at the Frochard's neck, sensing something or other vaguely familiar. The old woman, who has been drinking, has unloosened her nondescript rig. The girl's gaze sees a well-remembered object.

"My sister's shawl!"

The blue eyes are gleaming now in astonishment—with a hint of coming fury. She snatches the shawl from La Frochard's shoulders, fondles and caresses it. Then

like a small tigress robbed of whelp she advances on the beggar, shaking her in paroxysmal rage.

It would have been a comical sight if not so very serious a one; the tiny Henriette shaking a woman twice her size, pummeling her, brow-beating her till La Frochard sinks to her knees and begs for mercy.

"You have been lying, and that shawl proves it," cries Henriette. "Where is she?"

The old woman gets up. She changes her tone to a whine, and tries to pat Henriette in pretended sympathy. "Well, if you must know the truth—"

"Yes, yes," cries Henriette, "go on!"

"—she *was* with us, but alas!—poor thing—with the hard life we have to lead —she—she died!"

The searcher for Louise reels as if about to faint.

She collects herself with difficulty, and stares at La Frochard. A distraught look is on the girl's face.

It is a look of utter misery, compounded with mistrustfulness of the deceiving hag.

She leaves the cellar, fully resolved to

invoke the Law—if Law—in this wild time —there can be found . . .

A bundle of rags, on which Henriette has almost stepped in passing, moves very slightly.

CHAPTER XVIII

"THERE IS NO LAW—"

The wild and drunken madness of the triumphant people expended itself in many strange forms, of which none was stranger, more awesome, more ludicrous and yet more tragic than the Carmagnole.

This was a dance that seized whole multitudes in its rhythmic, swaying clutch. The tune was "Ca Ira!" that mad measure of the sansculottes, meaning roughly—

"Here it goes—
"And there it goes!"

—and go forever it did till all the world of Paris seemed a heaving, throbbing vortex of werewolves and witches, things lower than animals in their topsyturvydom, drunken frenzy and frequent obscenity.

The throng through which Henriette now directed her steps was verging on this madness, though not yet at the pitch of it.

Henriette managed to find her way to two sanculotte troopers stationed in the centre of the Place, to whom she told her story. Reasonable fellows they seemed, offering to conduct her presently to the new

authorities and get a search warrant for the Frochard clan. But the madder swirl of the Carmagnole came along, and presto! swallowed them up. It happened on this wise:

As the locust swarms of the dancers enveloped them in shortening circles, two young and attractive maenads broke from the throng and literally entwined themselves with the troopers. Military dignity, assaulted in burlesque, tried to keep its post. But the bold nymphs were clinging, not to be "shaken" ; as the mad whirl of the dancers touched the centre, the troopers and their female captors were borne away in the ricochetting, plunging motions, disappearing thenceforward from our story. Little Henriette dived to a place of safety, the side wall of the nearest building. Straightening herself after the unexpected knocks and bruises, she looked aghast at the scene before her.

Whole streets of them, plazas of them, these endlessly gyrating male and female loons; swirls of gayety, twisting, upsetting passers-by like a cyclone;—arms, bodies and legs frantcially waving, as at the very brink of Dante's Inferno!

Strange little dramas of lust and conquest punctuated the cyclonic panorama. Here, a girl's snapping black eyes, winking devilishly, and pursed-up Cupid mouth invited a new swain to master her. There, a short-skirted beauty, whose sways and kicks revealed bare thighs, was dancing wildly a solo intended to infatuate further two rival admirers. Again, a half-crazed sansculotte had won a girl and in token of triumph was spinning her body horizontally around like a top, upheld by the open palm of his huge right arm.

But what might be this comic figure, quite unpartnered—knocked and shoved from human pillar to human post—winning the deep curses of the dancers, and their hearty wallops when not o'er-busied with Terpsichore?

Picard, the ex-valet of aristocracy, finally let out from the Salpetriere mock-court, had stumbled into this bedlam of sansculotte craziness, the rhythm and proceedure of which were as foreign to him as a proposition in Euclid.

But the Jolly Baker, from the Ile de Paris, was his match. The bare-armed, lean-legged pleasurer had equipped himself

(by way of disguise) with a large false moustache, and evading the close watch of his hatchet-faced, middle-aged spouse, had come forth to celebrate. Neither dancer nor vocalist, the Jolly Baker had other little entertaining ways all his own.

As the foolscap-crowned, white-and-red-trousered Picard bumped the pave, he saw squatting opposite him a figure whose gleaming eyes, ferocious whiskerage and lean-wiry frame suggested the canine rather than the human species. The Jolly Baker was a bum werewolf, but a "hot dog."

The gleaming eyes never left Picard's face, the dog-like body jumped whichever way he did, Picard half expected the dog-man to bite or snap the next instant and take a chunk out of him. Both had got to their feet now; the stranger still silent and nosey, Picard looking out of the corner of his eye for a way of escape. But just then the Baker spied a maenad with a drum.

One could beat drum in celebration, if naught else. Lo and behold, the posterior of the foolscapped one would serve for a drum very nicely! The Jolly Baker twisted

Picard around, bending him half double as he did so.

With a rear thrust and firm shoulder grip, the Jolly Baker leaped upon Picard's back. Emulating the young woman's beating of the drum, he rained a shower of blows on the valet's hind quarters.

The new "drum"-beater was now quite the cynosure of admiring attention. He had captured the centre of the stage. He gloried in it. With a more elaborate, fanciful and complexive "rat-tat-tat-rat-a-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat—"

He suddenly lost his grip of the "human drum," Picard wriggled out from under, and the drummer bumped his own posterior on the pave.

Calmly, quite undisturbed, the foolish Baker continued to "rat-tat-tat" with a stick on the curb, then as the "Ca Ira" beats resounded above him, his own squatting body began to sway with the music in a heightened absurdity. Picard had run off. He was convinced these people were crazier than any of those in the mad cells of Salpetriere . . .

Long since Henriette had evaded the worse sights and sounds by creeping as best

she could along the side walls of the buildings, watching her chance to get away from the revelers. Again, at the street corner, another swirl passed over her, knocking her down. Ruefully she picked herself up again.

The throng had passed by completely, leaving but a drunken fool prancing here and there, or a scant winrow of half-prostrate figures. Henriette ran with all her might to the only refuge she knew—her old faubourg lodgings.

The middleaged landlady who in days agone had fetched the guard to subdue Danton's would-be assassins, and who likewise had resented Robespierre's prying as to the identity of Henriette's visitor, studied the girl at first a bit quizzically. Released from Salpetriere, eh? Was she the same sweet, pure Henriette she knew? Yes, the little Girard—la petite Girard—looked to be the same hard-working, respectable seamstress person of yore, only that she seemed very weak and about to collapse!

The landlady folded Henriette within one stout arm.

She pointed with her free hand to the bedchamber immediately above.

"Your old room up there awaits you," she remarked kindly. "As soon as you have recovered strength a bit, I have no doubt the old sewing job will be yours too!"

. . . Jacques-Forget-Not and his men arrived too late at the Prefect's palace for complete vengeance on the de Vaudreys.

Around the historic Fourteenth of July, there was a pell-mell exodus of aristocrats from the city. A panic-stricken servant brought the Count de Linieres tidings of the people's victory.

"Fly, monsieur! Fly, madame!" he cried. "The troops are overthrown, the Bastille surrounded, before nightfall the mob will surely attack here and try to kill your excellencies. Fly, I implore you!"

Other messengers confirmed the news, and thus it happened that the erstwhile proud and arrogant Minister of Police who but yesterday had ruled France was reduced to making the most hurried preparations for flight, aided by the distracted Countess.

The latter realized with a pang that the

hegira meant farewell, perhaps forever, to the chance of recovering her lost daughter Louise from this welter of Paris. How mysterious the ways of the Higher Power! Her beloved nephew the Chevalier, at least, was safe in the distant fortress to which the Count her husband had condemned him. Pray God Louise might be saved—, yes! and her foster-sister Henriette, beloved of the Chevalier—Henriette whom her husband had branded by unjust accusation . . .

The de Linieres party succeeded in evading the fate of numbers of the runaway aristocrats, who were bodily pulled out of their coaches and trampled upon or strung up by the infuriated mobs. They managed to make their way to the northeastern borders of France. There thousands of emigres were received under the protection of foreign powers, awaiting the ripe moment for the impact of foreign armies on French soil and the hoped-for reconquest of the monarchists . . .

That night the beautiful Hotel de Vaudrey—home of the Vaudrey and Linieres family and fortune—was given up to sack and pillage. Enraged that the objects of

his vengeance had fled, the leader Forget-Not ordered a general demolition.

Priceless works of art were hurled about and destroyed. The cellars of old wines were quickly emptied by drunken revelers. The kitchen and pantries catered to the mob's gluttony. Wenches arrayed themselves in the Countess's costly silks and linens; perfumed, powdered and painted with the cosmetics; preened and perked in the cheval mirrors.

Among the motley crew of destroyers, drunkards, gluttons, satyrs and sirens, our friend the Jolly Baker was on the job—unfortunately for him, accompanied this time by his hatchet-faced spouse.

He started a flirtation with a new-made vamp, all tricked out in stolen finery. The Jolly Baker had found a new use for his eyes and eyebrows, i. e., to convey love messages. He was making the most alarming motions and succeeding most prodigiously in evoking the new vamp's answering smiles when—

"Ker-plunk!"

—Dame Baker fetched him a tremendous slap directly on the face that caused him to see innumerable little stars.

Gradually coming back to this mundane world, the Jolly Baker resolved to devote his strict attention to the bottle . . .

CHAPTER XIX

KNIFE DUEL AND ESCAPE

The bundle on the cellar floor of the Frochards den stirred again, this time more actively.

The crippled knife-grinder Pierre had entered. His mother was again busied with her potations. Under the half-lifted rags showed the tear-stained face of Louise. The heavy fatigue of street mendicancy had wrapped her in deep sleep, from which she woke with a start to her wretched surroundings. The misery of it all overwhelmed her. She sobbed, and the big tears descended from her blind eyes.

"Don't cry, Louise!" begged the almost equally wretched Pierre. "There may yet be escape and the finding of your sister. Oh!" he said to himself. "If I had but the courage to lay down my life that I might make her happy!"

The ruffian Jacques Frochard was exhibiting a sinister interest in the blind girl.

He had forbidden Pierre to speak to her or come near her, and now as he entered, the crippled brother shrank away. "Get up and go to work!" said Mother Frochard to the girl roughly, yanking her to her feet.

"I'll find a way to make her work!" laughed Jacques with fiendish coarseness. "You'll slave for me, eh, my pretty? Yes, for you, no one but Jacques!"

He leered at her as he appropriated the coins of her singing.

Huddled in the corner, the silent cripple bit his finger knuckles until they bled . . .

Inflamed with liquor and lust, Jacques soon decided to carry out his purpose.

"Come with me, my little beauty!"

Mother Frochard chuckled at the sight of him mastering her. Struggle wildly as the poor blind creature would to avoid his grip, he was dragging her slowly to the stair while her screams were stiffled by one rough hand over her mouth.

But as he was doing this, the huddled figure rose. "I have been a coward long enough," said Pierre. "Don't touch her!" laying a restraining hand on Jacques' arm.

Astonished, Jacques turned. "Who'll

stop me?" He flung his brother prostrate half way across the room.

The cripple had risen again. A dirk gleamed in his extended hand. His eyes blazed like coals. Fury distorted his features which were craned forward in hideous ugliness parallel with the knife.

"I will!"

"You misbegotten hunchback!" roared Jacques, letting loose of the girl and drawing his own knife. "She is mine. I tell you I will kill anyone who interferes with me!"

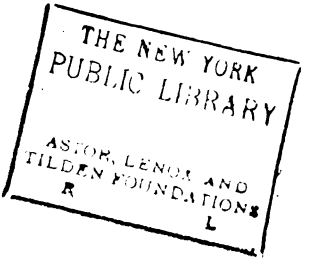
La Frochard tried to throw herself between the brothers. Louise groped away, and as by instinct found refuge behind Pierre. Jacques pushed the hag aside, saying savagely: "Let me look after this!"

Each brother stripped off his coat, holding it as a buckler whilst the right hand gripped a knife.

"You are right, Jacques," said the frenzied cripple. "We Frochards come of a race that kills!"

The adversaries feinted around each other in circles, in the Latin mode of fighting that was their heritage. Coats or side-

(D. W. Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm")
LOVE, MASTER OF HEARTS.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steps parried or evaded blows. The knives gleamed, but did not go quickly home.

If Jacques had the superior strength, Pierre was the more cat-like. His frail body was a slight target, so that the other's great lunges missed. Then, leaping like a puma, he was behind and under Jacques' guard, and stabbed him in the back.

The great hulk of a man fell back into La Frochard's arms, the blood oozing from a cut that was not mortal though fearsome. The hag-mother wailed and crooned as if he were in death agony.

"Quick!" cried the hunchback to Louise, "the road to liberty is open." Taking Louise by the hand, he ran with her up the steps out of the cellar . . .

But Henriette did not meet—not until one fateful hour—the itinerant grinder and her loved sister whom he protected. They were in many of the scenes of the later Revolution. Louise ate off the de Vaudrey plate, and Pierre perforce sharpened the knives of the September Massacre. Tramps of the boiling, temptestuous City, spectators but not participants of the great events, they looked ceaselessly for her.

Nor did the wicked Frochards abide in the den of Louise's imprisonment and sufferings. They too were swallowed up in the vast maelstrom—to reappear at one ludicrous moment of tragic times.

CHAPTER XX

THE NEW TYRANNY

Before telling you how the Chevalier de Vaudrey got out of Caen and how he fared forth to his love, it is meet that the reader should understand the rapidly changing conditions that converted the New France into a veritable Hell on earth.

After the Fall of the Bastille, and even after the mob's sortie on Versailles which enforced the royal family's return to Paris where they lived in the Tuilleries, it was the hope of the moderate patriots that constitutional monarchy might prevail.

These hopes were dashed, first, by royalty's intrigues and double-dealing, and, secondly, through the pressure of the revolting emigres and the threat of foreign invasion that welded all the defenders of France, willy-nilly, into a traitor-crushing and invader-defying Republic.

Of all the persoages of that unhappy time, the locksmithing King Louis XVI least understood what was going on about him.

A true Bourbon with an ancestry of nearly a thousand years' possession of the French throne, he never learned anything and never forgot anything. He played at being a limited monarch but his sympathies were naturally with the riffled aristocrats—the nobility whose privileges had been taken away, their estates commandeered, their chateaux fired or sacked, and themselves obliged to flee for their lives to the protection of the foreigner.

Not comprehending the nature of the Storm that wiped out old tyranny, Louis dangerously rode the Storm, he could not guide it. His lack of understanding is sadly shown in the closing scene at Versailles when they brought him news of the people's coming.

"Mais, c'est une revolte. Why, that is a revolt!" exclaimed the bewildered monarch.

"No, Sire," replied the Minister gravely, "'tis not a revolt. It is a revolution!"

Within a few hours the yelling maenads and bold satyrs of the sansculottes possessed the gorgeous Salon de la Paix, whilst the King and his family were on their way to Paris . . .

Then followed many weary months of

royalist intrigue, plot and counter plot, secret dickers with foreign Powers, attempts at escape, fresh indignities by the mob, until at last Royalty is suspended from its function, becomes the prisoner instead of the ruler. Turned out of the Tuilleries, Louis and Marie Antoinette are no longer King and Queen—henceforth Citizen and Citizeness Capet. At the end of dreadful imprisonments, looms for the hapless pair the dread Scaffold . . .

A real Republic teeters for a short period on the crest of the Revolutionary wave. Men are mad with the joy over the new thought of universal brotherhood. Little do Danton and the other utopians realize that the Pageant of Brotherhood is but the prelude of a new Despotism.

For a dark ring of foes—spurred to invasion by the King's misfortunes—surrounds France on every side. Within, the cry re-echoes: "The traitors to the prisons!" and all the aristocrats as yet at large are hunted down and put in durance.

As Minister of Justice, Danton, the idol of the people, acts quickly to subdue aristocracy, and ceaselessly organizes—organizes—organizes the raw republican levies

into troops fit to resist the advancing Prussians, Austrians and Savoyards.

Lashed to uncontrollable rage by the preliminary successes of the invading Prussians, the Paris proletariat break into the prisons and massacre the unfortunate members of the nobility there immured. Few are spared. Young equally with the old—girls and women no less than the sterner sex—the noble, the wise, the cultivated, the beautiful, are murdered in cold blood. The September Massacres shock moderates everywhere with the feeling that France is at last running amuck—the mad dog of the Nations.

Yes, France now is running amuck—'ware of her when she strikes! Lafayette and other moderates—indeed, several of the Generals commanding the patriot armies have fled over the border, disgusted with the national rabies, utterly unable to quench it.

The patriot ranks close up. The wilder element of the sansculottes grasps the helm of State. In the desperate need of a dictatorship to cope against the foreign invasion, Danton procures from the Legislature ab-

solute power for a little inner group, the Committee of Public Safety.

Working on the passions of the people, worming himself into favor by denouncing moderate suspects and advocating the extremest measures, our sly acquaintance of the faubourg lodgings—Maximilien Robespierre—becomes the head of this Committee—thereby the Tyrant of France.

The foreign foe is indeed driven back, but at what a cost! The rule of Robespierre's fanatical minority that has seized the State, inaugurates the dreadful Reign of Terror. The great Revolutionary leader Danton—Minister of Justice in the earlier time—has himself caused to be established the Revolutionary Tribunal for the quick trial of the public's foes, and the guillotine for the guilty. Robespierre uses it as a ready forged weapon for destroying all who do not think as he does.

In this storm-wracked world Jacques-Forget-Not is now a great judge and a most fanatical patriot. The avenger of the de Vaudreys heads the Revoluntionary Tribunal. He is in his glory now, for the aristocrats that the mobs overlooked are sent in batches to the guillotine—on the most

trifling charges, or finally without accusation at all. The mere fact of being an aristocrat is a capital offence!

And in and among these slaughters is intermixed the destruction of Robespierre's personal and political rivals—a work in which the vengeful Jacques-Forget-Not studies and obeys every whim of his master, for does not Jacques also have private grudges as yet unpaid?

. . . But Danton remains a popular hero. For his work in driving back the foreign foe, he is upraised in chair of state by the multitudes, heading a huzzaing procession and preceded by young girls strewing flowers.

None of the bloody butchery has been Danton's. He has been too busy fighting Prussia, Austria and Savoy. Today, as he sits in the chair of state acknowledging the acclamations, his heart wells in gratitude to Henriette who had once saved his life—no face of treasured memory so dear as hers!

Confessedly, under the New Tyranny, there is nothing to engage the great heart and soul. Sick of the murderous scramble for pelf and power, he withdraws from

most political activity, though still able to exert a wide influence.

About this time twenty-two political rivals of Robespierre—the Girondists—were sent by one decree to the guillotine. Danton, vainly pleading for mercy, saw that the Committee of Safety machine was being made an instrument of slaughter. "France must be purged of all vice!" was Robespierre's sanctimonious reply to his passionate protest. Not long after, the rival masters of France faced one another in the hall of the Revolutionary Tribunal, whereof Jacques-Forget-Not was President.

"Well works this Tribunal you established, Danton!" said Robespierre, in glee at the increasing number of executions.

"It was established," replied the pock-marked man solemnly, "to punish the enemies of the people. Now through you —Robespierre—France rivers with innocent blood!"

. . . God help our hero and heroine if they should encounter its dread fury!

CHAPTER XXI

ADVENTURES OF A PILGRIM

Some parts of France continued to be held by the royalists after the establishment of the Republic.

Insurrectionary war raged in the provinces, particularly the stubborn war of La Vendee, and certain loyal fortresses like Caen managed to resist capture.

It was thus as a prisoner of the royalist faction, and quite out of touch with world-shaking events, that our young hero Chevalier Maurice de Vaudrey lived through the earlier period of the Revolution.

A love-message from him through Picard to Henriette—an unsuccessful attempt to escape; a glimpse of the still handsomely frizzed and powdered head gazing through trefoil Gothic window on the outer sunshine and liberty:—such is all that we may see of de Vaudrey's strangely trussed up life during this time.

He was still enshrined in the heart of the little seamstress in the Paris faubourg, still dear to his aunt the Countess who with her

husband was an emigre beyond the borders. Otherwise, no hermit nor solitary was more completely effaced from the world.

The first light of hope was brought to Caen by a messenger from the Countess, who had managed to smuggle through a letter or two and a small box of gold.

"I dare not advise you," his kind Aunt wrote. "Escape into France would invite your death as an aristocrat. On the other hand, if you make use of the accompanying pardon signed by your uncle the Count, the Governor of Caen will probably enroll you for the inhuman and useless war of La Vendee. Take the money, my dear Nephew, and use it as you deem best—the messenger will secure it for you outside the prison until you need it!"

De Vaudrey pondered, as his Aunt advised. But, really, there was but the one course for him! To win through, disguised, at whatever peril, to Henriette; to find her and Louise; to save them from that black welter of the Revolution, and guide them out of the country to the loving care of the Countess and the repentant Count: yes, such was the course that both Love and Duty dictated. He would begin it that

night, aided by his faithful friend the messenger.

"Hand part of the gold," he whispered the Countess's agent, "to some rustic carter on whom you can rely. Bring another part here and give it to a keeper whom I shall point out to you!"

The impromptu little plot worked perfectly. The friendly keeper, having gotten a peep at the ex-Police Prefect's letter of pardon, needed but the clincher argument of the gold in order to aid de Vaudrey's escape. A rope over the wall, and even a plank across the moat, were mysteriously provided. In the last silent watch of the night, the go-between (who had been waiting) conducted the escaped prisoner to the carter's cavern. Already the East was showing the ghostly light of the first faint streaks of dawn.

Having breakfasted in the cave and put his few belongings into a pack, de Vaudrey with the two others stepped out of the dark hole into the growing light.

The carter pointed to the Chevalier's frizzled locks and elegant if faded dress. "They would take you up at the first village

crossing on that!" he remarked. "Your get-up gives you away."

The Chevalier retired to a new toilette. Within, were the primitive resources of rustic wardrobe. As he emerged again from the cavern, old boon companions would indeed have been startled by the guise he now wore.

Beautiful apparel, cane, wig, lorgnette and snuffbox were in the discard. The frizzled locks were gone, revealing long straight black hair which was crowned by a shabby tricorne hat. The Chevalier's elegant form was covered by an ill-fitting ragged black suit, which a pair of dusty shoes well matched. Across one shoulder he carried a pack stick, to which a thoroughly disreputable-looking small black bundle was fastened.

"You'll do now," said the rustic. "Remember you're only a helper on a carter's journey to Paris."

Rustic and helper took their leave of the go-between by plunging through a wide but shallow stream. When they had emerged at the farther bank, they felt secure that their steps could not be traced. Waving good-byes to the other, the rustic

and his man hastened to a stable where they loaded a provision wagon and attached a country Dobbin to the thills. Presently de Vaudrey, in his new character of the carter's assistant, was on the first stage of the long journey to the storm-wracked metropolis.

The carter's load was of so little value, the whole outfit so poverty-stricken, that neither country Royalist nor provincial Revolutionary saw fit to bother them.

Gradually the carter sold his wares in the smaller villages en route. They wisely avoided the larger towns. The cart was nearly empty now. Saleables had all been disposed of except a few apples.

"How are you and I going to get into Paris?" said the distinguished young aristocrat, whose respect for the Reuben had increased daily.

"Trust me!" said the other. His broad, moon-faced physiognomy masked the cunning of the fox. "I have this apple here—"

The carter eyed his assistant intently and winked solemnly as if to say: "That will do the trick!"

As they leave the open country behind and jog through the better settled regions immediately north of Paris, let us take our stand beside the "barrier" or outer gate which they are slowly approaching.

Judge Forget-Not and his fellows are inspecting the barriers. The voice of the Chief is heard speaking.

"Watch strictly that no aristocrats escape. Our *new* law also condemns to death all who harbor an aristocrat."

The Inquisitor's face assumes a yet harsher expression as he addresses the guards: "Beware lest you yourselves be suspect!—Remember the sharp female 'Guillotine'!"

Forget-Not draws a significant hand across the throat. A shudder passes through the more timid folk.

The coarse-faced guards applaud and promise to use the utmost precautions. The judges move on, inspecting another part of the barrier.

CHAPTER XXII

ADVENTURES OF A PILGRIM (continued)

The farmer's cart nears the gate. The moon-faced Reuben is as impassive as ever. Though the tall assistant manages to keep his expression fairly immobile too, 'tis evident to us who know him that he labors under suppressed excitement. For the prize of his Great Quest is Henriette; the penalty of discovery and capture, Death!

The gallant young man does not hesitate, however. He has never shrunk from Danger's bright face, least of all would be shrink now when the passing of a brief ordeal may well mean reunion with his beloved and her rescue from the welter of Paris. The Pilgrim's soul hungers and thrists for her. After the great Sahara of imprisoned loneliness, how near the Oasis of love and rapture! How beautiful the prospect, if not indeed Mirage!

The rustic's helper dismounts with the farmer at the gate, and follows him into the office of the registrar. The farmer presents a pass.

"This is for one only," says the registrar at the gate, roughly. "The other cannot go through," he says, pointing to de Vaudrey, who tries to look as stupid and uncomprehending as possible.

The farmer hands a big red apple to the functionary. But the latter makes a gesture of refusal.

"Bite into it!" says the rustic ingratiatingly.

The official bites at the top which comes off—a smooth and even slice. The centre of the apple is hollow. Within it are several gold coins.

Quickly the gatekeeper covers the golden apple with his hairy paw. "Your papers are all right," he says gruffly, rapidly converting the figure 1 into a 2, and viseing the pass for two. He motions for both the man and the youth to go through.

The farmer and his follower drive in and mix with the crowd on the inside of the barrier. At this stage the farmer disappears from our history. But the face of the youth is noted by an eagle eye and recognized by a brain that does not forget!

The prowling Judge sees the Chevalier, though the Chevalier does not see him.

"Follow that man!" he says quietly to his deputies. "We shall catch him red-handed in some plot!"

Our little heroine had lived quietly for many months in the faubourg lodgings to which, perforce, she had to return after her vain visit to the Frochard cellar and her rough handling by the Carmognole rioters. The little sparrow of a seamstress was quite undisturbed by the great events of the French Revolution, except as they had put everything at sixes and sevens and whirled away her own intimates in the mad whirligig.

The pock-marked man (whom she had sheltered overnight in this very place) was the Savior of the Country; the prying lodger Robespierre was the Chief of State. Of course she never saw them now, her small self would hardly dare address them! Sister Genevieve and the Doctor, who had told her about the Frochards' den, were no longer within her ken.

The weary months had dragged along. Notwithstanding the cheering message conveyed by Picard, her knight the Chevalier—so far as she knew—was still a prison-

er of Caen. And the weary months had dragged their ball and chain of silence and despair still more wearingly in the failure of her many renewed attempts to find Louise. The blind sister was again swallowed up in the devouring city—the Frochards were fled.

Whither was Henriette to look—whither to turn?

A ray of light from the window glinted on the holy Book of books that the girl treasured. She opened it. A line read at random comforted her. Clasping the volume in her hands, she knelt in prayer, addressing God softly:

"Thou who hast said: 'I am the Light!' oh, show me the way!"

At the sound of a knock at the door, the girl rose from her supplications. Entered sad and dusty pilgrim, carrying his few belongings in bag suspended from shoulder stick. Now they dropped sharply to the floor, and the disguised Chevalier gazed long and earnestly upon his love.

Her eyes in turn were riveted on his sad, lean apparition, how terribly changed from the old debonair days! Kind sympathy spoke in her look and mien till the radiance

of love, beginning in little ghosts of welcoming smiles at the corners of her mouth, broke into clear effulgence.

The Chevalier tottered forward. He collapsed into the nearest chair.

She put her arms around him and hovered there, comforting him with affectionate little hand pats and soft kisses.

Jacques-Forget-Now, the avenger of the de Vaudreys, had not been far behind during the pilgrim's tramp across the city. He had in fact sneaked back of him, seen the wanderer enter Henriette's door. Standing at the head of the stair, he could almost overhear stray phrases of their talk, knew that they were quite within his power.

The shaggy-haired one fairly gloated in his triumph. "Number One!" he hissed, raising a forefinger in token that de Vaudrey—the first of his Trinity of Hate—was in the net. "Two and Three shall come next!" he whispered savagely, knuckling down two other fingers to mark his vengeance on the Count and Countess.

The shaggy-haired Forget-Not hurried down the stairs, his gaunt features baleful with unholy glee. Pointing significantly overhead, he ordered a detail of his guards:

"Arrest de Vaudrey and all in that room!" The men at once proceeded to carry out the order.

The guard captain would have been equally at home in a pirate crew or at a land massacre. Enormous black brows and heavy moustache accentuated his ferocity, the particolored Revolutionary garb and in particular the red-and-white striped pantaloons gave him a bizarre appearance like a pirate chief.

The detail were armed with muskets and bayonets. They clattered up the stairs and burst into Henriette's room.

The lovers seemed dazed rather than affrighted. They clasped each other again. With a little warning gesture Henriette bade Maurice say nothing when the captain addressed him as de Vaudrey.

The villain laid a heavy hand on his victim while two of the soldiers seized and pinioned his arms. "You are under arrest as a returned emigre!" the head pirate said.

Then he turned his attention to Henriette who made futile little efforts like a tiny mother wren.

"You are also under arrest, Citizeness,"

said the captain harshly, "for the crime of sheltering a returned aristocrat."

"She cannot be blamed," interrupted de Vaudrey. "I entered this place, uninvited."

"Silence!" roared the Captain. "Your plea, if any, must be made to the Revolutionary Tribunal."

CHAPTER XXIII

BEFORE THE DREAD TRIBUNAL

That awful Tribunal sat daily. During the height of the Tertor, no time was allowed to prisoners for the preparation of their cases—no interval elapsed between the prisoners' arrest and their arraignment. Dispatch—*dispatch*—DISPATCH was the essence of the bloody business, the purpose being to strike terror upon all that opposed the little fanatical minority then in power.

Therefore the guard brought Henriette and Maurice directly from their arrest to their trial, and they gazed upon a sight for Gods and men—a travesty on the sacred name of justice. Such scenes would seem unbelievable to us but for the recent events of the Russian Revolution, which prove that in our age also a proletarian dictatorship can be senselessly wicked and cruel.

The trials—beside their Terror function of upholding a minority government—were great public shows for the howling rabble and leering sansculottes, the hoodlums of Paris whom even the masters dared not of-

fend. The riff-raff acted exactly as at any of their own celebrations and feastings.

Along the side benches and up on the "Mountain," flirtation and sweethearting went on, of a rough-and-ready order. Some spectators coolly munched their dinners. Ohters, having brought along their bottles, indulged in drinking bouts. Everyone's ideas of a good time cannot be the same. There was our eccentric acquaintance the Jolly Baker, for instance. The height of bliss for him, at one of these capital trials, was to lean far, far back with open mouth whilst a tilted bottle, held by a ministering Hebe, spilled ecstatic drops of damp and ruby "happiness" upon his "open-face" physiognomy.

Another misfit of the grotesque crowds was Picard, foolishly trying to discover what 'twas all about, gazing soulful-eyed into hoodlum "mugs" that gave him the merry "ha! ha!" or sickened him with the likeness of the First Murderer. But "crime," in one instance at least, was followed by "punishment," for as the murderous citizen suddenly thrust out his roaring raucous mouth, Picard inadvertently leaned back.

The huge sansculotte, to his own surprise, was eating the bushy horse-hair pigtail of Picard's bobbing queue! The ex-valet made a quick duck. His murderous-looking neighbor, with a full swing, walloped the countenance of the sansculotte beyond . . .

On this day of our characters' trial, the side benches and balconies of the great hall quickly fill with the howling, leering mobs —the fierce and grotesque chorus of the grim tragedy.

Interspersed with the rabid Jacobins are other — less partisan — spectators, and among the hurrying throngs a close observer might have noticed the luckless Pierre Frochard and the blind girl Louise entering. They found seats on a front bench.

"The judges are taking their places now," said Pierre. "You will soon hear the trials. Over on their right sits Robespierre, the dictator of France!"

The judges, so-called, are five villainous individuals, wearing dirty-looking plumed hats, black jerkins and breeches, and tall jack boots. The shaggy-haired Jacques-Forget-Not presides.

A frowsy public prosecutor—red, white and blue cockade affixed to his tousled hat plume—calls the names of the accused and presents the charge. From the background, the stripe-panted soldiery are bringing the victims up.

"They are arraigning them in batches," says Pierre. "The judges make quick work!" Louise shudders, lays hold of his arm.

There is something horrible in the sound of the advancing footsteps; the harsh accusations and weak replies, oft drowned by the sanculottes' roar; the sentences of doom, and the final scuffling of feet as the soldiers seize their prey and bear it off.

Innocence and guilt often go up together.

Unfortunate women of the street are arraigned next high-bred aristocrats, or moderates whose only crime has been to denounce such horrors. A gallant gentleman pleads vainly to the judges who are also the jury: "We have had no trial!" The mob howls "Guillotine!" and "Guillotine!" is Jacques-Forget-Not's brief sentence!

A young Corsican lieutenant of artillery looks on meditatively. His silent thought

is sensed by a bystander who remarks: "I suppose, Napoleon, you think you could manage things better!" The man grins. But Napoleon Bonaparte—he who snuffed out Revolution later by whiff of grapeshot —nods gravely yes.

As the prisoners from the faubourg are brought in, Henriette sees the loved and long lost face of her dreams among the front row of the sansculottes.

Stupefied, unbelieving, she looks again and again. Yes, it is she—none other! Her own peril and that of Maurice are unthought of. Protective love of the blind one tides back in resistless strength.

She is trying now to escape from the guards, run to her sister—even to pantomime her love, gesticulate it with funny little motions and confidential fingers on lips—forgetting that the other cannot see! And then her wild, excited cry rings through the great hall:

"LOUISE! LOUISE!"

Louise jumps to her feet, groping wildly towards the cry. Her blind features are strained in agonized expectancy. Pierre has located the frenzied Henriette. He

guides the groping blind girl from the benches to her sister.

In this council chamber of hates and cruelty, rulers and attendants alike are steeled against shrieks of suffering or the outbursts of the accused. A fence of locked bayonets stops each advancing sister. Paying rather less heed to the incident than if it were a request for a drink of water, the soldiery push back Pierre and Louise to the seats and make ready to obey the prosecutor's call.

"Citizen de Vaudrey and Henriette Girard to the bar!"

The Chevalier faces the dread quintet. The prosecutor reads the charge, demands the death penalty on the returned aristocrat. Poor Henriette is divided between her frenzied wish to clasp her sister and her horror about Maurice.

The young man defends himself.

"An emigre, yes!" he acknowledges, "but not an enemy of the people."

Many a spectator of the scenes—even the wicked judges—could bear witness (did not prejudice blind!) to his kindness for the afflicted and fallen. Is there an undercurrent

of sympathy for him even amongst hard sansculottes?

But this is Jacques-Forget-Not's great moment.

Vengeance's hour has struck.

The wickedness of the old de Vaudreys is to be expiated at last!

CHAPTER XXIV

VENGEANCE COME TO JUDGMENT

"I MYSELF accuse you, Citizen de Vaudrey!" says the Judge, rising and pointing to the culprit.

"I accuse your family and all aristocrats of oppression and murder through countless generations!"

A yell of approval—the savage howl of the Mob Beast—resounds from the rabble whose passion is played upon. It is followed by the general roar:

"Guillotine! *Guillotine!* GUILLOTINE!"

With a smile Forget-Not records the death sentence given by his compliant fellow judges, in his book. Chevalier de Vaudrey is hustled back to the rear of the hall.

Poor trembling Henriette is next. The horrors of Maurice's condemnation and the thought of her little lost sister nearby, rack her with a stinging pain in which is commingled little thought of self.

"You sheltered this aristocrat?" questions the Judge.

"Of course—I—love him!"

"The penalty for sheltering an emigre is death!" replies Forget-Not shrilly, again playing to the Jacobins.

But Henriette is thinking of the suffering Louise. She strives to direct the Judge's attention to the blind girl.

"She might hear!" says Henriette softly. "Please—not so loud!"

The Judge turns the pages of his book in studied indifference.

"Please—my sister—we have just met after a long time—she—she is blind!" The little voice breaks off in sobs.

The idea strikes her that, if they can only see the helpless creature, they will have pity. She calls:

"Louise, stand up—they want to see you!"

The cripple Pierre aids Louise to her feet. She stands there alone, a picture of abject misery.

"You see!" cries Henriette. "Blind—no one to care for her!"

The dandified dictator of France fixes fishy eyes on the little person in the dock. One affected hand has raised a double lorg-

nette through which he peers at her. He muses, strokes a long nostril with his forefinger, recollects something which causes him to curl his lip:

Henriette's door slam on the obscure Maximilien Robespierre finds its re-echo to day at the gates of Death. Ah, yes, he has placed the girl of the Faubourg lodging now!

"You were an inmate of the prison for fallen women?" he asks coldly.

The clear, unashamed blue eyes would have told innocence if the words had not.

"Yes, Monsieur, but I was not guilty."

Robespierre's delicate hand passes in the faintest movement across his throat and toys with the neck ruffle underneath it.

His lips frame a dreadful word though he does not speak it. A nod to Jacques-Forget-Not completes the by-play.

The servant imitates the master's gesture. This time, the drawing of the hand across the throat is more decisive.

Jacques speaks the word that his master did not vocalize. The other judges confirm it.

"GUILLOTINE!"

Henriette is borne shrieking out to the

(*D. W. Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm"*)
DANTON AND MEN RIDE TO THE RESCUE PAST THE CORRUPT AND DEGENERATE ORGY OF THE "FEAST OF REASON."

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death chamber—"One hour with her—only one hour—then I will go with him!"

But she and the Vaudrey are already being taken out together by the attendants.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE VOICE OF DANTON

We have explained that Danton took little part in the Government after the repelling of the foreign foe and the commencement of the Terror. He had no sympathy with the excesses of his former colleagues, but on the other hand was subject to strange lassitudes or inhibitions that oft paralyzed his spirit except at the supreme hour.

Saving France had been his real job.

Among these petty and mean minds seeking power or pelf or the repayment of some ancient grudge, Danton had nothing to do! He loved his frontier fighters—men who, the same as himself, dared all for France.

They were somewhat like our cowboys of the Western plains. Born to the saddle; recruited for the northern cavalry; supremely successful in whirlwind charges and harassing flank attacks that drove back Brunswick's legions, they were now quartered on well-deserved furlough within the city.

The old lion of Danton's nature woke again, his indomitable spirit reasserted itself whenever he went to their yard and roused them by his patriotic eloquence.

Alas! within the tribunal and on the execution place at the other side of the city, was that going on which shamed patriotism and mocked liberty.

"La Guillotine"—that fiendish beheading instrument that a deputy named Doctor Guillotin had devised—was become Robespierre's private engine to tyrannize France.

It stood in a great suburban place, on a scaffolding led up to by a flight of steps: a tall massive upright with high cross piece —uglier than the gallows. A brightly gleaming, triangular knife, about the size of a ploughshare, worked up and down in the channels.

The knife was first raised to the top of the upright, and held there by a lever. The master of the ceremonial raised right hand in token to the executioners to be ready.

As he dropped his hand in a down-sweeping gesture, one of these villains pulled the rope which released the lever. Down fell the heavy knife across the neck opening of a body board to which the victim was strap-

ped. Below the contraption was a huge basket.

A cordon of soldiery guarded the place, keeping back the crowds. The brawny executioners—naked to the waist, like butchers in a stockyard—daily performed their office.

On this day of Henriette and Maurice's sentence, they were giving it a preliminary trial. "The trigger's been slipping—not working well," the head fellow explained to the master of ceremonies. Back and forth the terrible guillotine knife hissed and whistled until they pronounced its action perfect . . .

Danton and three of his friends had an errand at the Government that day that took them past the death chamber. A little frightened face amongst the condemned drew his notice.

"Killing aristocrats, yes!" he was thinking. "But these poor huddled folk are not the public foe. Would I might summon the legions to put an end to slaughter—but that Robespierre has inflamed all France with the lust of blood!"

He was startled from the reflection by the woe-begone, distrait little thing who

semed hypnotized by terror. The tall man bent down and peered at the girl.

Like the other condemned, her hands had just been pinioned behind her. She stood forlorn and helpless.

Horror froze him... The Child who had saved his life from the spadassins—the dear little face the memory of which he had always treasured! He asked her a mute question, she mutely nodded.

So black-hearted murder was to snuff her out too—yes, and that young man nearby, Maurice de Vaudrey whom he knew.

Not if Danton could protect and save!

Stern was his voice as he said to the jailer:

"There is some mistake. Keep her—and her friend—until I return!" He was on his heel and striding to the courtroom.

A follower sensed his purpose. He laid hand on Danton's shoulder, saying: "No, Danton—you endanger your own life!"

"What if I do? She must be saved."

As we see him pass into the Tribunal, let us stop for a moment and watch the proceedure in the death chamber. Outside, the tumbrils of death clatter up to receive their load. A functionary calls the names

of the condemned whilst a court officer identifies them.. Each in turn is bundled off to the carts. The men hesitate over Henriette and Maurice.

"The ex-Minister of Justice," said one, "asked that this case be delayed."

"Her name is here," said the master functionary, a creature of the Dictator. "She goes—"

"We might as well take the other too," said the court officer, pointing to de Vaudrey . . .

Superbly the Lion of the Revolution faced the judges and the mob, and demanded a hearing. Robespierre uplifted eyebrows and half-smiled, vulpinely. His rapid exchange of looks with the Court seemed to say: "Well, we have got to listen to this crazy man, but be on guard!"

The president, Jacques-Forget-Not, took the cue and acceded to Danton's request.

"A great injustice has been done," cried Danton, "to the innocent and helpless. I ask the lives of Henriette Girard and Citizen de Vaudrey!"

The judges did not need to answer.

A savage cry of "No! No!" swelled from the infuriated "Mountain."

The sansculottes half rose from their benches, shaking minatory fists, yelling, gesticulating. Faces were contorted in fury. The mob—the same that had once acclaimed Danton in chair of state—was not to be balked of blood.

The orator continued: "These sufferers are friends of you who demand their death. The girl once saved *me*—the organizer of your victory—from spadassins. The boy was ever known as the people's benefactor—I have seen him buy loaves to keep you from starving! Now through trumped-up charges they are to be hurried away to death—"

"You question the justice of the people's Tribunal?" inturrupted Judge Forget-Not shrilly, with obvious play at the mob.

"Hell's bells!" replied the indignant Thunderer. "I established this Tribunal. Did not I as Minister of Justice set it in being, and shall I not speak when crimes are done in its name!"

. . . In the death chamber Henriette and Maurice were trying to kiss each other goodby. The guards had separated them.

Vaudrey was going in one death cart, Henriette in another . . .

He had silenced the querulous Forget-Not, was waking the echoes with the same thunders that had nerved France to resist the foe. "I ask for their lives not only, but for MERCY and JUSTICE to wipe out the tyranny and cruelty that are befouling all of us. I ask for a regenerated nation, purged of these vile offences."

Robespierre was sinisterly serious now.

The group of judges sat amazed.

"Give Danton a hearing!" was the murmur among the sansculottes, half awed by his old witchery.

The impassioned orator swung upon them, his old supporters.

"My heart—my brain—my soul—my very life! Do they mean anything to you—to France?"

"YES! YES!" shouted the answering mob, caught by the personal appeal.

Alarmed at the swiftly changing tide, the Chief Judge sought the Dictator's eye. The orator's eyes were far away, his frame was convulsed by emotion as he cried: "My very life—everything—I owe to one of these victims!" The mob identified its

cause with Danton's, submerged their personalities with his own!

Robespierre answered Forget-Not's look. He indicated the speaker by a slight motion of the head, then drew his right hand across the throat, played with the lace ruffles—and smiled! Forget-Not understood. Not then—but later, only a little later—would come the time to snuff out this disturber!

Danton turned from the mob, swinging the peroration to the judges in the one impassioned cry of "JUSTICE!" Lion-like he glanced from those mean, denying souls to the rabble, and held out his hands.

Like an avalanche, the "Mountain" swept down from benches to hall and on, on toward the judges. Murder was in their eyes. A word from the Thunderer would have sealed Forget-Not's fate.

"His wish! Give Danton his wish!" they roared.

Like a monkey the man Forget-Not leaped and cowered behind his bar, imploring Robespierre for a sign. The Dictator nodded to yield. But again was there not the very slightest motion of hand past neck, the eyes side-glancing at the Thunderer?

Danton stilled the tempest as Chief Judge

Forget-Not wrote the reprieve and the other affrighted Judges confirmed it.

. . . Outside, the tumbrils were already on their way to the guillotine. Henriette and de Vaudrey were approaching the gates of death. . . .

CHAPTER XXVI.

REPRIEVE OR AGONY.

The man Forget-not, directly the paper was signed, rushed past the speaker and out of the hall into the lobbies. He was followed presently by the Court's messenger. There was here some trickery or other that Danton sensed.

He could not stop the Chief Judge leaving, but he pounced on the messenger and yanked the reprieve out of his hand. "I will deliver it!" said Danton. The people applauded the act. Everyone knew that he dared greatly.

Quick as he had been, Jacques-Forget-Not had already given his orders.

"Stop Danton if you can!" had been Jacques' word to the outer guard. To his inspectors of defences, he had said: "The barriers to the guillotine—close them!" He ran forth to see that the orders were obeyed. None of Robespierre's party wanted to see Danton achieve his errand of mercy—least of all, the vengeful Jacques-Forget-Not! . . .

The pock-marked Thunderer wasn't stopped beyond the door. His giant strength threw off the minions who would have blocked him. He hastened to the yard where his beloved troopers were quartered.

Henriette and Maurice's route lay past an obscene and sacrilegious rite.

Mocking at religion, the more fanatical had thrown off every vestige of decency and indulged in Bacchanalian worship of a so-called "Goddess of Reason." This was a lewd female from the Paris half-world, flower-chapleted, flimsily draped, prancing in drunken frenzy atop a table surrounded by her "worshippers."

The Feast of Reason included hundreds of revelers grouped around the open-air tables for the "supper of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," and between long lines of these they were obliged to pass.

"Drink a toast to the Goddess!" cried the revelers, offering the winecup to the victims.

"Curses on them!" said others. "Death is too good for vile aristocrats."

"Tra-la-la-la!" sang drunken wenches,

"La Guillotine will soon hold ye in her sharp embrace—"

The blasphemy of burlesquing a far greater Scene of Sorrows occurred to drunken Carmagnole dancers. The notion was applauded, carried into effect at once.

A tall sansculotte reached over betwixt the guards and placed a Crown of Thorns on the girl's brow. Another dashed a cupful of vinegar in the girl's face.

"Can't you see she's helpless?" said a centurion, pointing to her pinioned arms. He yanked off the chaplet and threw it back in the crowd. They roared with merriment at the farce. . .

But, in the stable yard of the Northern cavalry, Danton from a horseblock was addressing the fiery spirits who knew and loved him.

"Will you dare with Danton?" he cried. "Will you risk Death to open a Nation's eyes?"

The head Cavalryman embraced the Thunderer and kissed him on both cheeks.

"We are with you to the last man—to the last ounce of our strength to save this girl and boy!" he said while the others cheered.

Danton had got a gallant white mount, the Captain was on a noble black Arabian charger; the others had leaped astride their ever ready army steeds—the ride with the reprieve was in full course!

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FAREWELL

Louise, guided by her faithful attendant Pierre, had left the courtroom directly after the condemnation. Leaning heavily upon him, the blind girl had staggered out, oppressed by the awful knowledge that her sister Henriette was doomed to die. "Oh, take me to her!" she had cried.

There was only one thing to do: to follow the route of the death tumbrils, in the slight hope of overtaking her. The crippled Pierre could not walk fast, and the steps of Louise had to be most carefully directed. Now and again Pierre could see the death carts a long way ahead, he tried to hasten their steps, but presently the transports of death were out of sight again.

A traffic tie-up and street delay that halted the tumbrils just beyond the scene of the bacchanalian Feast of Reason, gave them their opportunity. Here the revelers had burlesqued Henriette as the "Woman of Sorrows," and here the guardsman had thrown off the chaplet and rebuked the crowd.

During the halt Pierre and his companion came up with what speed they could; he led Louise to the back of the death cart, and placed her hands on the bound and standing figure of poor little Henriette.

"It is your sister!" said Pierre softly.

Gently the blind girl's fingers traveled up to the wet face of her little foster-mother, now bending towards her. With a handkerchief Louise tenderly wiped it, her fingers gave loving little pats of the heaving neck and bosom, she kissed the stained cheeks, and then the girls' lips met —met long and passionately! No words were spoken, none was needed for a reunion that was also a farewell.

The cart moved. The loving lips were parted. Now one might see Louise's imploring arms still held out toward the sad receding little figure.

It was indeed a busy day for the executioners. Batches of men and women preceded Henriette and Maurice. Two of these were beautiful young girls who, in default of priest, were saying the last offices of the Church as they knelt on the bare ground. In tragic glory Faith's clear

credo rang out: *"I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live!"*

Their lovely heads dropped in the basket as the knitting women clicked their needles and cried "Two!" Henriette, with a physical retch at the sight, fell back half-fainting on Maurice. Roughly the soldiers yanked them asunder.

"Citizeness, your time is come!" said one of the brawny butchers. He half led, half supported her up the steps of the guillotine. . .

The Chief executioner turned Henriette about, inspecting her fine points as an equine connoisseur would inspect a filly. He gloated over her not yet budded form, the swan-like neck, unlined piquant features, the golden head-curls that fell in ringlets.

"A pretty one—eh, Jean?" he commented to his assistant.

Between the two, they had strapped her unresisting on the board. They lowered it below the razor edge of the knife, so that she lay prone with her neck directly underneath. The finale was to fasten on the neck piece, a round-holed cross board

which prevented the head from drawing back. . .

Alas! what avails it that five miles away —in the heart of the city—the hoofbeats of a company of cavalry resound rhythmically over the flagstones?

Danton and his Northern riders are straining every nerve, galloping their steeds furiously—eyes fixed on the seeming-impossible goal. Rather are they modern centaurs, each rider and steed a unit of undivisible will and energy: Danton a furious resistless hippogriff, fire-striking, fire-exhaling, in unity with his white charger; the lean-jawed, sternly set Captain on his lean galloping Arabian, cyclonic, onrushing like some Spectral Horseman; the rest riding like the Valkyries—as it were, twixt Heaven and earth—their galloping beats scorning the ground as they rush by to the hissing of the cleaved and angry winds.

But what avails it? . . .

Even on the straightway 'twere a quarter-hour ride to the outer-suburban locality where the guillotine does its dreadful work. Ancient Paris with its tortuous streets delays them. Ahead, are Jacques-

Forget-Not — Jacobin troops — barriers— gates.

Poor little Henriette's golden head!

Is it not fated to drop in the basket long, long before they can appear?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MANIAC WITH A DAGGER

A sansculotte soldier, less brutal than his fellows, had allowed Louise and Pierre to approach one side of the scaffold. They were more privileged than the frantic Picard, who could not get near his young master and mistress. Revolutionary infantry guarded every side of the public square. Intermingled among them were the favored hoodlums of the Jacobin party, execrating the victims and howling with glee whenever the dread axe fell.

Among the riff-raff, Mere Frochard and her precious son Jacques Frochard were conspicuous. For no particular reason they were gloating over the cutting-off of aristocrats, whilst indulging in rough horseplay at the expense of the friends of the condemned. Picard's quaint look of helpless sympathy excited ready mirth.

"Sniveling over those good-for-nothings, eh?" La Frochard curled her heavy moustachioed lip in scorn.

"We'll find a way to make that sensitive

young man feel something—" she confided to Jacques. A moment later she had pulled over a sansculotte's bayonet, with which she executed a neat jab into Picard's anatomy.

Picard leaped in the air like a jumping jack. When he descended to earth and turned to survey the cause of his torment, he faced but an impassive trooper with weapon at parade rest and the grinning countenances of Mere and Jacques Frochard, convulsed with laughter.

Picard decided the vicinity of the guillotine was almost as dangerous for him as for his master. He edged out of range, biding the occasion for a counter-thrust. . . .

Pierre and Louise stood on the other side of the scaffold, the heavy structure of which quite hid the ruffian Frochards and their horseplay with Picard.

Henriette had been borne up the steps of the guillotine a few moments before Pierre and Louise reached the scene. The cripple, terribly excited, was telling Louise of Henriette's being strapped to the board and shoved toward the knife vent.

"That big murderer is going to kill her!" hissed Pierre.

Louise's blind features became contorted with agony. Large tear drops fell from her eyes. Both arms were extended toward her sister above, then clawed convulsively at Pierre.

"They - have - put - her - head - in - the crossboard-and — oh, oh! — fastened-it-down!

"The-executioner-is-all-ready." Pierre was gesticulating like a madman. He seemed to be raising despairing hands to high Heaven, in token of helplessness.

Above—around—everywhere, he looked for succor; found none. A glance from Henriette's doomed form to Louise's bitter anguish converts him into a maniac.

"HE'S ASKING THE MASTER FOR THE SIGNAL TO PULL THE ROPE!"

Pierre shouts the words in a fury that is rapidly growing uncontrollable. Spectators for the first time notice his strange actions. But neither the expectant executioner nor the self-important master of ceremonial looks down, or distinguishes the cry in the babel of savage sounds.

The wild youth now disengages himself

from Louise's clutch. With his right hand he pulls a dagger from his hip pocket. Look! As the master's signalling hand is upraised high and begins to lower, the boy leaps up the steps of the guillotine, and attacks the executioner whose fingers are already on the death rope. . .

Ride on yet more fiercely, O Danton and ye fierce Cavalrymen—ride on, e'en past the barrier, if Jacques-Forget-Not and his men do not stay thee. Yes, thank God! there may yet be time, should this maniac with the dagger provide sufficient respite!

. . . The brawny butcher is too astonished to defend himself. His nerveless fingers are no longer on the rope; he stands like a stalled ox in front of his homicidal assailant. With the rapidity of lightning Pierre plunges his long Provencal dirk in the executioner's side. The butchered butcher falls with a single bawling outcry and a groan. The crowd is thunderstruck, and the pinioned de Vaudrey is wild with joy. Though bound and helpless, he tries to leap up to his prostrate Henriette.

But the master of ceremonial, at first too panic-stricken to intervene, now summons

the sansculotte guards from the ground below. Up the steps on the double-quick they rush with fixed bayonets. As the huge victim falls back into the arms of his assistant, the bayoneting soldiers corner the dirk-waving Pierre.

The brief contest is quite unequal. In less time than it takes to tell it, one of the men plunges his bright, long steel in Pierre's side. The latter falls like a lump of clay on the scaffold flooring. Several of the bayonets speed toward the inert lump, with the intent on the part of their owners to fling the body contemptuously from the scaffold to the floor.

But a more refined cruelty speaks: "Save him for the guillotine!" The soldiers leave the crumpled-up, desperately wounded Pierre, dooming him yet to taste La Guillotine's embrace. They subdue de Vaudrey and truss him up anew.

The roars of the crowd die down. Comparative order is again restored. The master of ceremonial, having recovered the habit of command, orders Jean, the remaining executioner, to complete the stricken one's job.

Fortunately for our heroine under the

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knife, the second executioner is slow and awkward. He has seen butchery come quite too close to his own flesh! Still somewhat unnerved, he prepares himself for the task with clumsy movements and halting fingers. The master bids him hurry—Jean takes his time, he's not going to bungle the job. . .

As the supreme moment nears, it is well that we should note what is happening with Danton and his Centaurs—

CHAPTER XXIX.

DANTON'S RIDERS

About half way of the journey through the City, Jacques-Forget-Not and his men take up a stand in front of the onrushing cavalry.

They wave orders and prohibitions.

They yell to the horsemen to draw rein.

Resistlessly the troopers keep their careering course—the talk and gestures are but as the East Wind to tensed Danton, stern-set Captain, and the rest.

Forget-Not's tribe escape the deadly horse hoofs by quick side jumps.

Within the next few minutes—even while the head executioner is making the little victim ready—Danton and his riders reach the barrier on the Guillotine side of Paris. Orders had already been received to close the gates at the cavalry's approach.

"Quick! there is not a moment to lose," yells the Jacobin commander as he sights the oncoming host. He hastens to deploy his soldiers with spears and pikes across the barrier, whilst the keepers bring the heavy gates to.

The barred gates and the opposing fighters threaten to dash Danton's every hope of saving by reprieve his "dear one of treasured memory." Indeed, as we have seen, but for frenzied Pierre's maniacal slaughter of the headsman, the fatal blow would now be falling! Neither Danton nor his men, of course, know that. Theirs to struggle on, to confront and conquer fortune, never to despair! Within those iron souls is no such thought as "Defeat."

Hurrah!

One foremost rider has managed to squeeze through the mighty gates before they clang. Danton and the rest of his men face a small army on the closed barrier's City side.

The superb horses would charge against a stone wall if bade to! They charge against the living wall of foot soldiers; kicking, pounding, trampling in the narrow space, while the riders strike.

Some footmen perish under the hoofs. Others save themselves by leaping, scrambling out over the side parapets. The attack become a rout. Hip-hip-hurrah! The lone rider on the guillotine side has succeeded in unloosing the bar. The gates

fly open. Danton's cavalry dash madly down the straight and unobstructed road that leads to the Place de la Execution, still a few furlongs distant!

Can they even yet save her? For now it would appear as if the supremely tragical moment might anticipate them—by seconds!

During the final furlongs—the executioner now in readiness—Henriette looks up with gaping mouth at the awful knife edge. A terrible cry escapes her. Wracked with agony, she gazes about at the sea of hostile faces—not one stray iota of sympathy in that Dark Hour. Missing is de Vaudrey, missing the loved blind sister! As the down-dropping gesture of Death is again begun by the grim master of ceremonial, Henriette with a low cry of "Louise!" shuts eyes and drops head to receive the stroke!

But the clatter of myriad hoofbeats assails the Master's ears; the hoarse cries of Danton's riders, and the astonished roars of the populace. His hand falters. He turns to look at the tumult. The executioner takes his hand off the rope.

The cavalrymen are dashing down the

roadway, from which quick clearance has been made by the sansculotte guards and the loaferish spectators. At their head gallops Danton, the Thunderer of old, thundering at the officials, waving in his free hand a State paper!

In front of the death machine he halts and dismounts—then taking the steps in two bounds, puts the reprieve of Henriette and Maurice in the hands of the master of ceremonial!

The Savior of France—the Organizer of Victory—brings such a show of power at his back and compels such respect that none dare question him. He strides to the guillotine, bades the trembling executioner release Henriette—himself personally unstraps her from the death board. So ensues a scene that would wring even a heart of stone: the delivery of a demented girl from Death's very passion and utmost pang!

Danton takes the little form in his arms, looks in her eyes, kisses her and tries to make her understand.

"For the honor of France," he cries to the assembled multitude, as he still upholds her swaying figure, "a monstrous in-

justice is righted. This girl, and that young patriot," signifying to the attendants that de Vaudrey should be unloosed, "are reprieved by the order of the Revolutionary Tribunal!" The multitude—caught by Danton's tensely dramatic announcement—applauds, even as it had jeered and mocked a few moments since.

But the girl, kept from falling by his protective left arm, still gazes upon him idiotically. She had died, was it not true? How then, she lives? What are these crowds, and who is this stranger? The gallant rescuer fears that her reason is gone!

"Release that boy!"

He has seen the wounded Pierre trussed in the far corner of the scaffold, guessed that some wild deed of the lad's stayed the judicial murder. His tones to the officials are sharp, imperative. The outraged superior of the hacked executioner looks around the assemblage for some prop of resistance—finds none—trembles—and is all bows and scrapes to do Danton's will. Pierre crawls painfully across the platform. He kisses the hem of his Savior's garment.

Danton has brought Henriette to the ground. He is looking for her friends now.

Catching sight of blind Louise starting up the steps, he brings her around and puts the loved sisters in front of one another. . . . Slowly the light of understanding comes into the eyes of her who had most loved and most suffered. She embraces Louise . . . Danton is looking for yet another figure, the affianced of Henriette. He draws over de Vaudrey, places the latter's right hand within the free hand of Henriette.

"Take her," he says kindly to de Vaudrey. "It is enough for me that I have saved France from this foul blot! . . ."

. . . Down in the crowd, too, the fortunes of war have changed. The wicked Frochards, who have been egging on the crowds to jeer the victims, have become distinctly unpopular. It is Picard's turn to jest the Frochards now.

A grenadier offers a little friendly assistance with the bayonet, pricking the old hag in a tender part as if by accident. She jumps and squeals. Sly Picard watches another chance, shoves forward his friend's bayonet to prick her again.

. . . Both she and her precious Jacques the Good-for-Nothing take it on the run,

enduring the buffets of the railing soldiery. Yes, Picard—our genial rogue of a body servant—gets in the last bayonet pricks and body wallops of this story!

CHAPTER XXX.

THE AFTERMATH

Danton later suffered the dark hour and the snapping of Life's thread through Robespierre's cruelty, but the glory of that valiant soul is eternal.

His plea for the ways of Mercy—his gallant deeds (like this particular one) of risking all for the life of a friend—were as signposts to bewildered humanity.. He foresaw the precipice down which the Terrorists were headed for the pit:

"This time twelvemonth I was moving the creation of that same Revolutionary Tribunal. I crave pardon for it of God and man. They are all Brothers Cain—I leave the whole business in a frightful welter. Robespierre will follow me; I drag down Robespierre!"

Of a verity, the following Thermidor or hot July saw the fate come true. Universally execrated, the Tyrant was himself dragged down and guillotined. Fell with him the rest of the murdering crew. Black hatred—foul suspicion—wicked vengeance vanished like departing plagues.

There dawned happier days wherein justice bore sway, and little gardens of flowers and love and happiness again sprang up and flourished. Among these blooming gardens let us seek the refuge of Count and Countess de Linieres after the Storm has abated and the kinsfolk it has sundered are united. The sisters of our story are their especial care, daughter and foster-daughter of the exquisite chatelaine.

Young Maurice de Vaudrey is their pride. The old gentleman has reconciled himself to the passing of the Ancient Regime, and through his nephew's good office has made his peace with the State.

On a bright and beautiful day as Henriette is flitting about the garden, the Doctor—none other than our old friend of La Force—comes with a precious gift.

"The removal of the cataract has been successful," he says, presenting Louise. "Is it not a joy that she can see?"

The girls intertwine arms and laugh happily. The parents approach. Henriette and Louise embrace the Count, now their foster parent and protector. Back of the Count limps the devoted Pierre, now fully restored from his old hurt of the bayonet

thrust. Pierre is to be the Countess's especial care.

That lovely lady has received her daughter Louise within her arms, a daughter who for the first time can look upon the mother of whose loving care she was deprived for a score of years. In a few moments Henriette summons her sister to her side as a young man, whom we should all recognize, joins the little company.

"Allow me to present to your new eyes Monsieur Maurice de Vaudrey—" then with a shy smile and a glance back and forth, Henriette adds:

"*Do you approve of him?*"

Recurs the memory of that almost forgotten incident in the Normandy home—Henriette's promise to stay single till the blind sister should win sight and approve the suitor. Louise is so happy that she decides to tease. She is about to shake her small head and her lips to frame "NO!" But in another moment she uses her new gift to inspect the marvelous young man of whose perfections she had so often heard.

She looks at Maurice from top to toe; the shapely head covered with luxuriant locks, the fine brown eyes, the Apollo fea-

tures comely yet sensitive, the elegant form, small hands and feet, the graceful and chivalrous carriage—the MAN who is looking at her with a kindly affectionate smile. Really, Henriette hadn't told her half enough! She clasps her sister with one hand, Maurice with the other, cries: "YES!"

We may leave our hero and heroine there—as Louise and the oldsters presently left them—to taste the exquisite happiness of mutual love. For Love is stronger than Death, and must prevail. And the kisses of Maurice and Henriette blotted out all the wrack and nightmare of the "Orphans of the Storm!"

THE END

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